



Issue 32

FACTS AND FIGURES!

June 2026



In-depth bargaining analysis for negotiators

Unite – Fighting for
JOBS · PAY · CONDITIONS



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Forensic accounts: another resource for Unite Reps

Our members are facing another year of price hikes.

City forecasters say inflation will be pushing 5% by the end of this year. Energy bills will be back close to £2,000, food prices up 50% compared to five years ago.

Two in five of people in the UK now say they don't expect to save any money in the next 12 months.

That's in a UK economy worth nigh on £3 trillion.

Still, employers will try to low-ball pay, telling you there is no alternative to below-inflation deals.

But what are they saying to shareholders while they're pleading poverty at the bargaining table?

CEOs have been boasting about their firms' "resilience" in recent quarterly earnings calls. Even firms in sectors like Civil Aviation - directly affected by the Strait of Hormuz being closed - have been promising shareholders they'll get their promised billions in dividends.

This kind of thing is exactly why I set up Forensics Account reports and the Financial Insider online tool when I became General Secretary. Detailed analysis of employers' finances across our sectors and regions, produced by accountants trained and directed to look through management spin.



Already, Reps have generated 12,000 ability to pay reports using Financial Insider.

On top of that the Work Voice Pay team have produced hundreds of in depth reports when more detailed analysis is required.

I hope to ramp this up in future years.

Why? Because Reps use them to win.

This month Unite members at Barclays won a pace-setting, inflation-busting deal for 20,000 workers for example, after years of hard work building up the union in the workplace.

Convenor Katie Reilly said the Forensic Accounts Report they requested was "absolutely invaluable":

"We get a Forensic accounts report every year. We ask for quite specific things, not just profits, because big banks and insurance companies judge success by many metrics. The report was massive, but it helped ground our arguments in the room."

I'm proud to say Unite Reps have won over £700 million in dispute since I became General Secretary.

These disputes have been backed by the full resources of their Union, including increased strike pay and increased legal backing.

Forensic accounts are another part of that backing.

They come with Work Voice Pay tools like Pay Claim Generator and the new mobile app, and the package of Mental Health support for Reps I introduced last year.

As a Rep, you are the core of our union.

It's my mission to deepen even further our industrial focus and help you win for our members.

If you want a Forensic Accounts report for your employer get in touch at forensic.accounts@unitetheunion.org.

You can access the Financial Insider tool at www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay.

In solidarity

Sharon

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SECTION ONE

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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What is the backdrop to collective bargaining this month?

Facts and Figures

Collective bargaining is the tried and tested method of pushing up pay. We are the great equalizer; a force for good; getting money into the hands of the working class, the real wealth creators.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



1. What is the backdrop to collective bargaining this month?

1.1 RPI is 3.1% but may push 5% by year-end

This is on top of price increases of 40% since 2021. The price of staples like petrol and clothes rising faster than the overall rate.

Our members need inflation-busting pay deals to cope, with forecast RPI setting the floor for a decent pay deal.

- See the Cost of Living section for more.

Combines show the way

Unite Reps and members have won over £700 million through taking action in dispute since 2021. This month Finance Combine Reps from Barclays and Diligenta tell their stories of how they won, with tips on tactics to build power in other workplaces.

- See the Victories section for more or listen to the Facts & Figures podcast, available on Apple and Spotify.

The energy crisis is far from over even if the Strait of Hormuz stays open

Even if the Strait of Hormuz stays open it will be months before shipping levels return to pre-war levels. Workers will continue to feel the consequences of the Iran war.

This year energy bills are set to push £2,000 while interest rates may be hiked again. Workers' deserve pay rises that reflect these ever-growing costs.

- See the Cost of Living section for more.

Summer is here: workplaces need to adapt for the heat

Hot working puts workers at risk of dehydration, fatigue, and in severe cases heat stroke. While the law does lay out some protections for workers' it is far from complete. It doesn't even mandate a maximum working temperature.

The best solution is getting protections through collective bargaining.

- See the Workplace Issues section for more.





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What have we won this month?

Unite will do everything it can to support reps building power in the workplace, at the bargaining table and in dispute. Work, Voice, Pay tools, Facts & Figures, Forensic Accounts, strike pay, Strikes Plus and organising campaigns: they're all designed for a clear purpose: To help you win better jobs, better pay, and better conditions.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



2. What have we delivered through collective bargaining?

2.1 Winning on pay: Unite members at Barclays, Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports, Menzies, First South Yorkshire Doncaster and Grangemouth all win inflation-busting deals

This month, Unite Reps at **Barclays** secured a sector-leading pay deal for 20,000 workers.

Unite members voted overwhelmingly to accept an improved offer from the bank. The agreement gives around 20,000 lower-paid Barclays employees a 5.35 per cent pay rise and represents one of the strongest settlements in the finance sector this year.¹



The deal followed negotiations between Unite and Barclays after union members made clear that the bank's original pay offer was not acceptable. Unite campaigned for improvements to the proposal, arguing that workers should receive a settlement that protected living standards and reflected their contribution to the company's success.

That pressure delivered results. Through collective bargaining and negotiations, Unite secured a significantly improved offer, which members subsequently backed in an overwhelming vote. The agreement covers lower-paid workers across Barclays' UK operations and establishes a benchmark for pay settlements across the finance sector.

Barclays Reps were supported by the **Finance Combine** which brings workplace reps together across the sector to build unified bargaining power. It is a critical asset because it breaks down company silos, allowing workers to fight corporate wealth with industry-wide solidarity.

Facts and Figures

"This excellent deal demonstrates what can be achieved through collective action and strong union organisation. Unite members made clear that Barclays' original offer was not good enough. By standing together, they secured a substantially better deal that protects living standards and delivers meaningful pay increases for thousands of employees." - Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham

Glasgow and Edinburgh workers win from the threat of industrial action

Coordination in our **Civil Air Transport** sector is also bringing results. This month close to 1,000 workers in **Edinburgh and Glasgow airports** win above inflation pay deals after threatening strike action.

Around 230 **ICTS workers at Glasgow airport** who deal with passengers directly in the security search areas and process them for flights backed a two year pay deal. A 5% increase in basic pay and shift allowances will be backdated to 1 January with a one-off bank holiday included in this year's deal. In 2027, the workers will receive the RPI inflation rate plus 1% in basic and shift pay alongside a boost to terms and conditions from 1 January.

Also in Glasgow, 160 ground services crew employed by **Menzies Aviation** will receive a 4.4% increase backdated to January, and then from 1 July a minimum pay increase of 5% rising to 11.1% for some workers. The one year pay deal covers Menzies dispatchers, allocators, airside agents, and controllers.²

Over in Edinburgh Airport, over 400 directly-employed workers secured an enhanced pay deal, also following a ballot for strike action. The new offer, overwhelmingly backed by the membership, will benefit the workers by £1800 or 5.5% - whichever is greater - in 2026 alongside improvements to shift, sickness and paternity pay. In 2027, the workers are to receive 4% or the RPI inflation rate plus 0.5% effective of January 2027. There are also similar enhancements to wider terms and conditions in the second year of the pay deal.³

The workers set to benefit include airport ambassadors, airside support officers, engineers, and managers.

First Bus Doncaster drivers win pay parity after successful strike

In **First Bus**, Unite members also delivered substantial gains through sustained industrial action and workplace organisation during last month.

Pay across the bus industry is notoriously unequal. This month, Doncaster bus drivers won **pay parity** after successful strike action.

Around 230 **First South Yorkshire bus drivers in Doncaster** secured pay parity with their Sheffield counterparts after taking strike action in a dispute over pay. The new agreement raises the top driver rate from £14.15 to **£15.60** an hour immediately, followed by a further increase to **£16.10** an hour from 31 August. There is also a commitment that drivers will receive the same percentage increase pay offer as Sheffield drivers by 5 April next year.⁴

The dispute arose because Doncaster drivers were paid less than drivers employed by the same company in Sheffield. Determined to secure equal treatment, Unite members took several days of strike action and maintained pressure on the employer to deliver a fair settlement.



That action delivered results. Following negotiations, workers voted to accept an improved offer that not only closes the pay gap with Sheffield drivers but also includes a commitment that Doncaster drivers will receive the same percentage pay increase as Sheffield drivers by 5 April 2027.

This victory demonstrates the power of collective action. By standing together and taking strike action, Doncaster drivers secured equal pay treatment, significant wage increases and improved conditions.

Grangemouth tanker drivers win a four year deal

Also this month, **Grangemouth tanker drivers** secured a major four-year agreement delivering a 4% pay rise for 2025, a further **5.4%** increase in 2026, inflation-protected rises in 2027 and 2028, an increase in annual bonuses to **£1,500**, and a rise in employer pension contributions from 6% to 8%, alongside improvements to sick pay and allowances. The deal was won after months of industrial action and represents a significant victory for Unite members working in the fuel distribution sector.⁵



2.2 Growing our union: Unite wins recognition at Seagate Technologies and St John Ambulance

This month, Unite secured a third recognition agreement with Seagate Technologies, across almost all non-management roles completing a major organising campaign that now gives the union bargaining rights for almost all categories of non-management employees at the company's Northern Ireland operations.

The latest agreement covers around 21 administrative workers, adding to previous recognition deals for manufacturing and engineering specialists and strengthening Unite's position at one of the region's largest employers.

Seagate, a global leader in mass data storage, employs approximately 1,400 workers in Northern Ireland. Over the last two years, Unite has systematically expanded its presence across the workforce, securing recognition agreements for key groups of employees and growing membership to more than 700 workers.



The latest recognition agreement marks a significant milestone in that campaign. With recognition now covering almost all non-management grades, Unite has strengthened workers' collective voice and expanded its ability to negotiate on pay, terms and conditions across the business. Negotiations on this year's pay deal have already begun and will now include workers in the assistants' group.

By expanding recognition across the workforce, Unite has secured a stronger collective voice for hundreds of Seagate employees and laid the foundations for future gains on pay and conditions.⁶



Workers at **St John Ambulance & Rescue Service (SJARS)** secured a major organising victory after Unite signed a recognition agreement covering 56 employees. The agreement gives Unite sole bargaining rights over pay, terms and conditions, working hours and annual leave, while also strengthening workplace representation in a jurisdiction where there is no statutory trade union recognition framework.⁷

The recognition agreement is particularly significant because Guernsey has no union recognition legislation, meaning all agreements are secured voluntarily through negotiation. Unite members spent 15 months negotiating the deal, which establishes formal collective bargaining rights and strengthens workers' ability to influence workplace decisions.

The agreement also delivers important new rights for workplace representatives. Unite reps will receive paid time off for training on employment rights and health and safety, and will be consulted on key workplace issues including scheduling, working practices, new technologies, redundancies, business transfers and employee policies.

By securing collective bargaining rights and stronger workplace representation, SJARS workers have established a stronger voice at work and laid the foundations for future improvements in pay, conditions and workplace protections.

Facts and Figures

2.3 Moving the Government: Unite wins rethink on electric vehicle mandate threatening thousands of UK jobs

Tens of thousands of automotive workers represented by Unite are set to see improved job security, after pressure from Unite has moved the government to reform the ZEV mandate on electric vehicle sales.

Under the ZEV mandate, car makers are required to make an increasing percentage of electric vehicle sales each year. They receive credits for electric car sales, and are fined if they don't hit the target.



However, the target increases each year and the current gap between the number of electric vehicle sales made by UK car makers (roughly 25%) and the government's target (around 33%) continues to widen.

This gap is set to cost UK automotive producers in the region of £11,000 in fines per vehicle, providing an incentive for producers to simply stop selling cars rather than risk fines - threatening UK jobs.

Under pressure from Unite for radical reform, the government announced it would consult on reducing the requirement for carmakers to be selling 80% of electric vehicles by 2030 to a target of just 50%. So, the target for sales in each year up to 2030 would also be reduced, and with it, the risk of fines that threatened UK jobs.

"This is a huge victory. UK car workers have been increasingly fearful for their jobs. The government at the highest level has listened to the concerns of Unite and is now set to act decisively to protect the jobs of UK automotive workers. As Unite has said the failure to act would have been an act of self-harm to a sector which is a jewel in the crown of UK manufacturing." Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham



2.4 Workers' Voice: Finance Combine Reps describe how they won for their members

Unite's Finance Combine has brought significant gains for workers in the sector. By standing together, sharing information and agreeing a common approach, workers across the UK's major banks, insurance companies and outsourced areas have secured important wins. In this month's Facts and Figures we feature two: one at Diligenta, part of the TATA group in insurance, and another at Barclays, the major UK retail and investment bank.



Hear it straight from the front line! Listen to the full interviews on Facts and Figures podcast: **Spotify:** <https://tinyurl.com/4uf9y5zc> **Apple Podcasts:** <https://tinyurl.com/3uv8ae8d>

2.4.1 Barclays Convenor Katie Reilly on how member engagement, data preparation, and persistence helped bank a pace-setting win

We talked to Katie Reilly, National Convenor for Barclays Bank, and a leading light in the finance combine. You can read more about the Barclays win at the beginning of this section.

| Katie tell us about yourself?

KR: I'm Katie Reilly. I'm a full-time convenor for Barclays. I've been in the role for about 9 months and although I'm based in Liverpool, we work nationally across the UK, Ireland, North of Ireland, and Channel Islands.

Before that I was a workplace Rep for about seven years in a contact centre.

| Tell us about the pay campaign and what you achieved?

Facts and Figures

KR: It was a long year. We normally survey people around September and October, put in a claim around November and negotiate for a month or two, but this time our pay round lasted about nine months and we went to ballot twice.

The campaign delivered one of the strongest outcomes Barclays workers have achieved, with around 20,000 employees receiving pay rises of at least 5.35%, more than one percentage point above RPI inflation for the period.

The claim centred on a one-year deal, an RPI-plus increase, changes to higher-grade pay structures and the removal of performance gateways.

| How did you engage the members?

KR: We run our survey for around a month. We ask whether staff deserve at least an RPI pay rise, whether they are paid fairly, and how they have fared over the last 12 months. Members can also tell the union what is happening in their lives and workplaces. We collect that data and present it back to the bank to show why we think the claim is affordable.

| One of the most successful aspects of your campaign was explaining why, as Unite advises, we use RPI as the preferred measure of inflation.

KR: We ran a campaign explaining what RPI was and how it affected people. It got members talking about why they supported an RPI-plus claim.

The first ballot result was a reject from members because they did not feel it was close enough. The second ended in a strong acceptance. The final settlement delivered significant gains. We knew around 20,000 workers would be getting at least 5.35 per cent. The union also secured guarantees and underpinned for some higher-grade employees whose pay arrangements had become increasingly discretionary.

| Tell us about how you used Unite resources?

KR: **The big one is the Forensic accounts report we get every year.** We ask for quite specific things, not just profits, because big banks and insurance companies judge success by many metrics. The report was massive, but it helped ground our arguments in the room and was absolutely invaluable.



Obviously, the combine is a big part of how you bargain in the finance sector. Can you tell us about that?

KR: We've learned an awful lot from the insurance sector this year, particularly with the Diligenta and Capita campaigns. **The combine has been invaluable.** We had more to learn from each other than the differences we had, and the strategy is the same even if Barclays means scaling it up to a bargaining unit of 35,000.

Finally, what three lessons would you share with other reps based on your own major win?

KR: First, data cleansing and mapping. Our membership data is now the most up to date that it's ever been.

KR: Second, when you go quiet with members, especially during a negotiation when you are embargoed, that is when you start losing people. If you are ever unsure, ask them. You are the voice in the room and the people who have given us the mandate.

Third, keep up the activity. We used actions, updates, campaigns on RPI and surveys asking members what they most wanted from a pay rise.

2.4.2 From pay freeze to pay deal: Branch Chair Damian Kavanagh on how Diligenta workers won

After being told there would be no pay rise while the company paid millions in dividends, **Unite members at Diligenta** organised and took strike action across five sites earlier this year. The campaign forced improvements on pay, won better sick pay provisions and secured greater transparency in future negotiations.

Liverpool Branch Chair and National Chair **Damian Kavanagh** reflects on the dispute and the lessons it offers for trade union activists everywhere.



Hear it straight from the front line! Listen to the full interviews on Facts and Figures podcast: **Spotify:** <https://tinyurl.com/4uf9y5zc> **Apple Podcasts:** <https://tinyurl.com/3uv8ae8d>

Tell us a bit about your role in the union.

Facts and Figures

DK: For the last four years, (just over now), I've been full time as the Liverpool branch chair for Unite. That's a full-time seconded position. I've worked in the same street since 1987, which is very unusual, and I'm proud of the history we've got in Liverpool and the strength of the branch.



There's obviously been a big dispute at Diligenta which ended in a settlement. Can you tell us a bit about the dispute and what you achieved?

DK: It was a national dispute - I'm also the National Chair - and we ended up with five sites going out on strike, with a sixth site prepared to join if the dispute escalated further. The company came to us for the 2025 negotiations and basically said it was a pay freeze this year, not a pay offer.

I do know that when it came to 2025, we'd had historically real terms pay cuts of 15% since 2020. At the same time, the company was paying millions of pounds in dividends. Members could see that contradiction immediately.

So to say that you couldn't afford the pay rise but you can afford a dividend: people aren't stupid.

That created huge anger among the workforce. **We worked closely with Unite organisers, negotiators and forensic accountants**, using the company's own published accounts to challenge the argument that there was no money available.



■ Tell us how you engaged and communicated with the members?

DK: Communication was absolutely central. We used Zoom meetings, newsletters, phone banking, WhatsApp broadcasts, peer-to-peer texts and face-to-face meetings. In a hybrid workplace you have to use every possible method to stay connected with members.

Every ballot increased turnout and increased the mandate for action.

One of the issues in the workplace, what do you want to tell us that's bugging you? What do you want to tell us that could be better? And we have like 97% or something of the people who answered the survey said that transparency on pay is a matter that's important to us.

We secured agreement that pay transparency would be fully implemented by 31 March.

We also won sick pay improvements for workers who previously had none. And we could also able to win sick pay for people who didn't have sick pay.

The picket lines were incredible. In January, in the dark and the rain, people stayed solid throughout the dispute. **We had support from other trade unions, councillors, MPs and Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham.**

Facts and Figures

What have we won this month?



And where did the settlement end up?

DK: We started from nil. The company then imposed 3%, which angered people further after they had voted for strike action.

We then negotiated improvements on top of that.

Crucially, we established RPI as the basis for future pay calculations. That was hugely important because RPI had never previously been part of Diligenta negotiations.

Finally, what lessons would you share with other reps and negotiators?

DK: Engage constantly with members, communicate honestly and use every available channel. Know your numbers and use experts where necessary.

And you can't go to war for war's sake.

So get your numbers right, really know your numbers and bring people in [like organisers] who can help your communication with your members.

At the end of the day, you're one of the members. You're there to represent them and fight for issues that matter in their lives.



2.5 Bite-sized Bargaining: Hear how more workers won better jobs, pay and conditions in 2025

When workers stand together, armed with the facts and supported by their union, real change is possible. Winning workers are telling us how they won better pay deals in their workplaces.

- **HSL Reps** on how they won 15.4% pay rise over two years after a strike action: <https://tinyurl.com/29whsadb> Facts & Figures December 2025, p.18.
- **Unite Rep Laurie** on how **Chartwells'** workers won full sick pay rights: <https://tinyurl.com/2u24cmww> Facts & Figures November 2025, p.18.
- **Unite EC South East Rep** and hospitality Rep **Megan** on working conditions in the hospitality sector: <https://tinyurl.com/3mjwjm57> Facts & Figures October 2025, p.36.
- **Senior Unite Rep Kevin Byrne** at **Livv Housing** and **Unite Rep Lorraine Hanson** at **Capita** told us how they won a pay rise through determined organising, collective strength, and the support of their union. Read the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/d5p4nwhp> or see Facts & Figures June 2025, p.29.
- **Lead Shop Steward Sharon Williams** at **Loganir** shared how strong organising, member-led action, and sector comparisons delivered a remarkable 27% pay deal over 18 months, and what others can learn from it. Read the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/53ambvb9> or see Facts & Figures April 2025, p.20.
- **Unite lead Rep Dishon Boxer-Gylenhall** shared how they secured a dramatic pay increase for cabin crew of **Qantas** in the UK. Read the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/zu4228bc> or see Facts & Figures March 2025, p.19.

Use Work, Voice, Pay tools to win

There are several tools in the **Work, Voice, Pay** armoury to understand more about your company's financial data and prepare better collective bargaining negotiations, all of which can be accessed at <https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay>





SECTION THREE

COST OF LIVING AND PAY

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What is happening to the cost of living and pay?

We are under no illusion: this is not the end - the cost of living crisis is not over. Furthermore, those who have profited from the crisis should pay for it.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



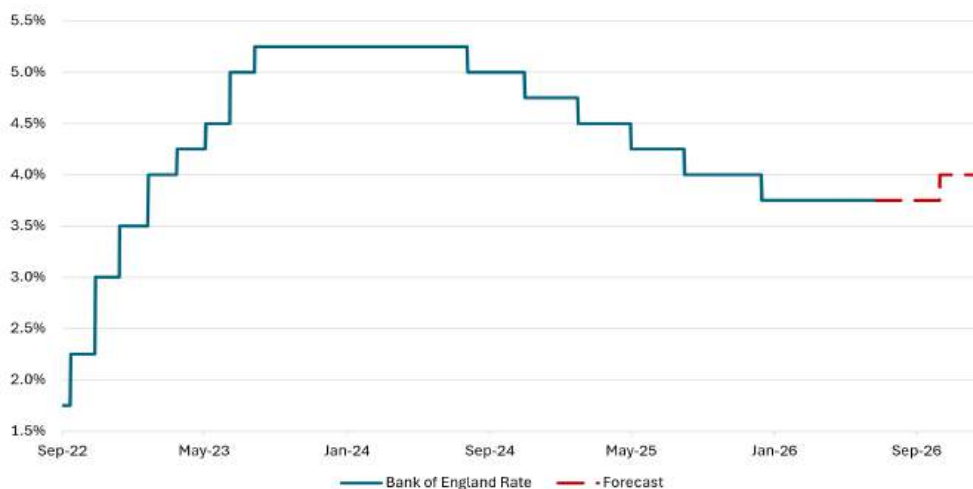
3. What is happening to the cost of living and pay?

3.1 Key figures: RPI is 3.1% and set to go higher this year

The RPI inflation rate has increased to 3.1%. It may be pushing 5% by year end. Unite Reps can use forecast RPI to set the floor for pay deals this month.

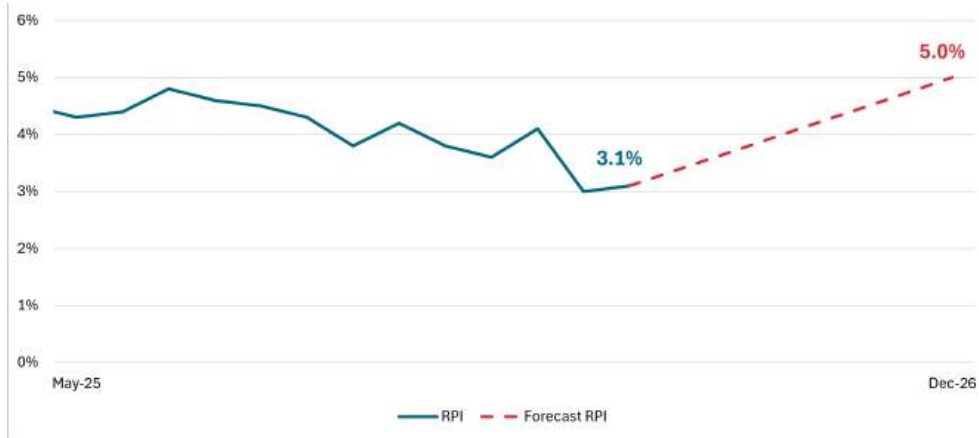
- **Prices rose 3.1% in the year to May**, as measured by the Retail Price Index (RPI).⁸ That is up from 3% last month.
- **Prices will rise further even if the Strait of Hormuz is re-opened.** It will take months before shipping volumes return to pre-war levels. Experts warn a "risk-premium" of up to \$10 per barrel of oil will be baked in for the foreseeable future. Official forecasts suggest RPI may push 5% later this year. We deserve pay deals that reflect that.
- **The Bank of England looks set to increase interest rates by year-end.** City traders expect the rate to be increased to 4% this year. This has a serious effect on our members' cost of living. Even a 0.25% rise will cost an extra £450 in mortgage payments for the typical household.
- **Tying pay to CPI or CPIH short-changes workers.** CPI is 2.8% this month, CPIH (which includes housing) is 3%.⁹

Traders expect the Bank of England to put up rates by year-end

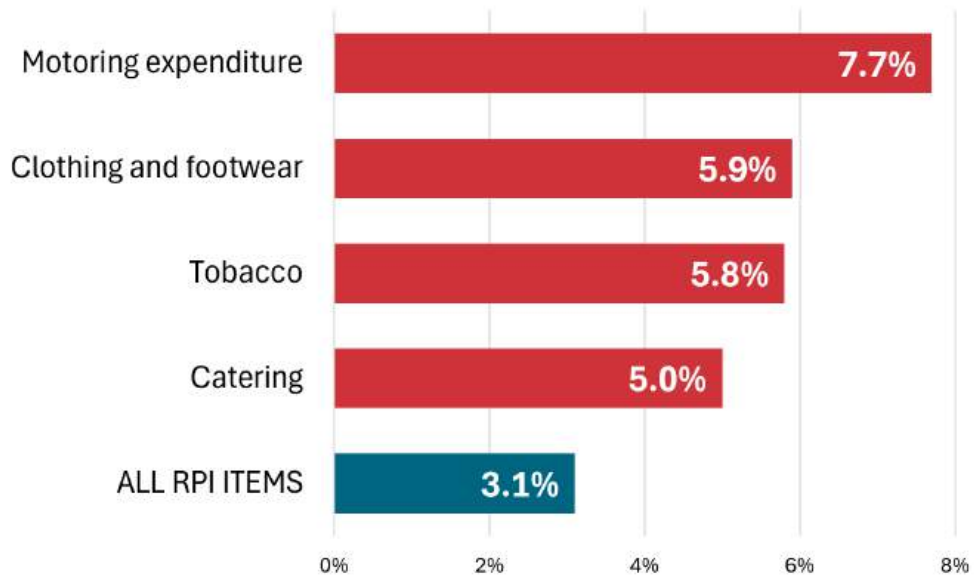


Facts and Figures

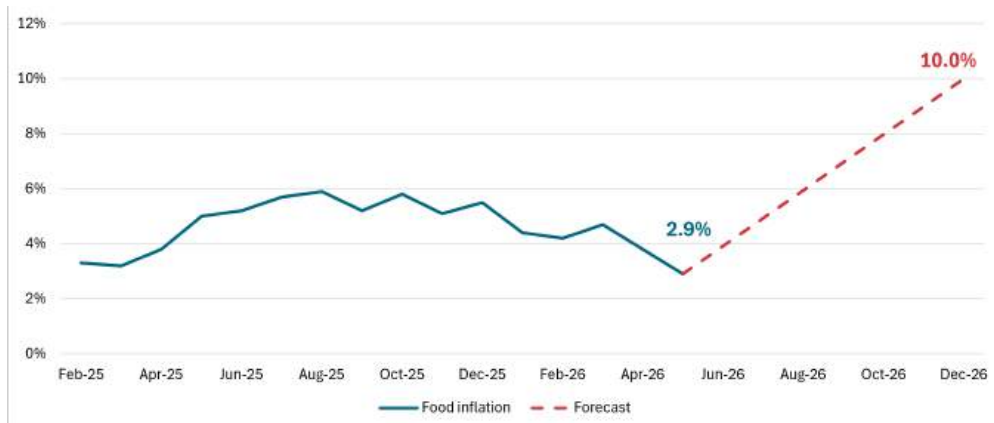
RPI is 3.1% but will go up by the end of the year



Motoring and clothing are rising faster than the headline rate

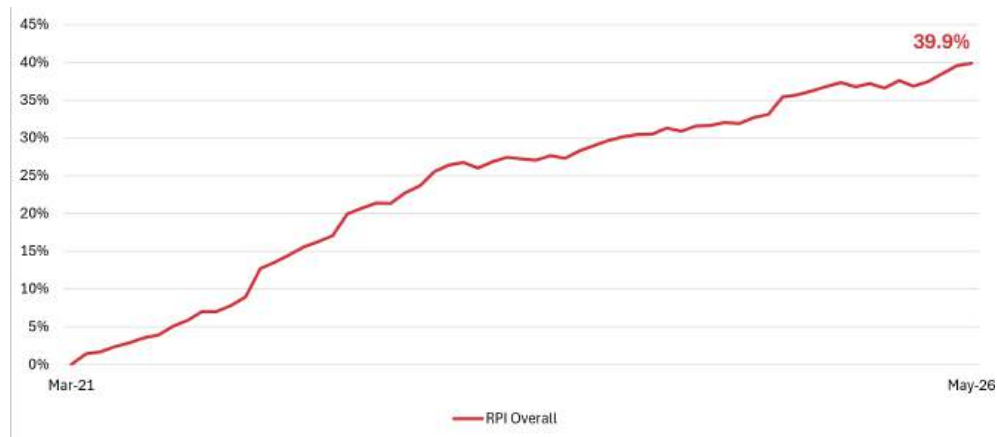


Food prices will be increasing by 10% by the end of the year

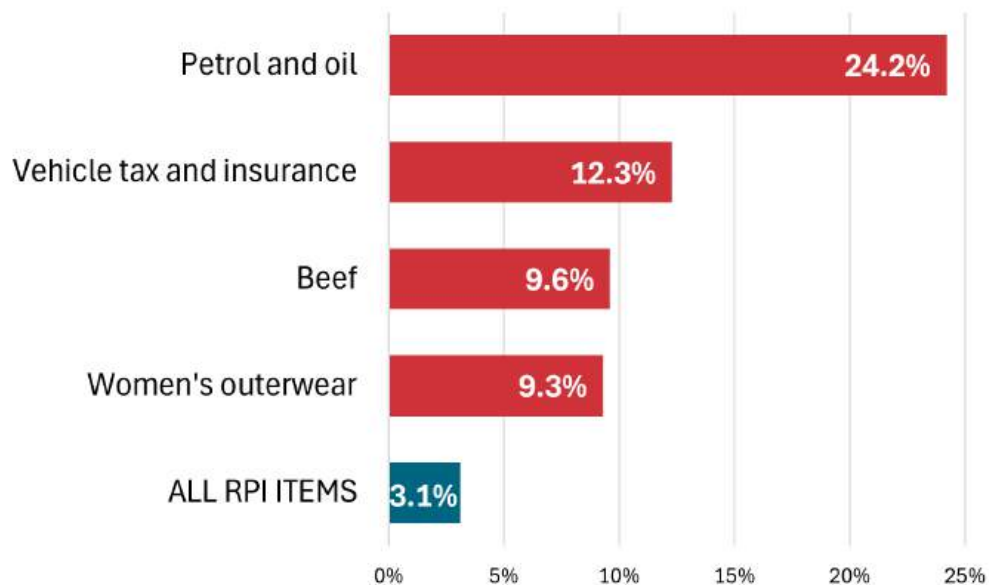




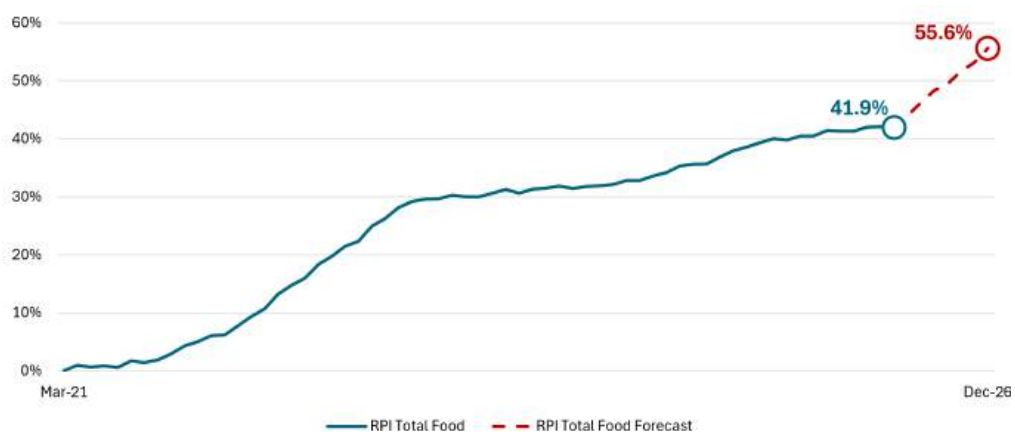
Overall, prices have risen 40% since March 2021



Fuel costs are up 24.2% year-on-year



Food will be 56% more expensive compared to 2021



What is happening to the cost of living and pay?

Facts and Figures

3.2 The energy crisis is far from over even if the Strait of Hormuz stays open

The Strait of Hormuz has been dominating news headlines for months now. And there's good reason for it - the Strait is the choke point for around a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supply.

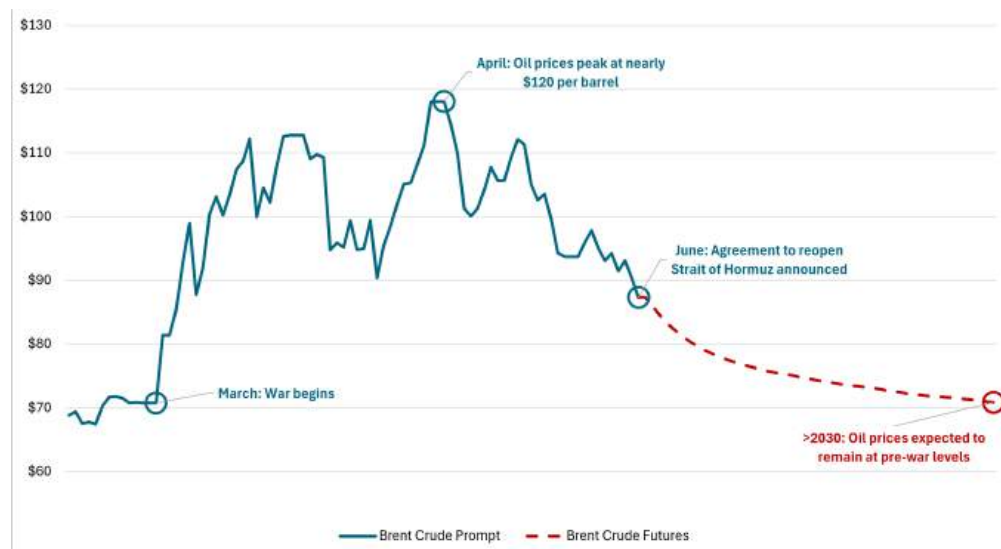
The closure at the end of February caused oil prices to sky rocket, which passed through to higher costs of essential items like food and energy. According to the latest news at the time of writing, the US and Iran have now agreed to a deal to reopen the Strait. The market price for oil fell in response to the news - but the energy crisis is far from over. **Workers will feel the consequences of its closure in their pockets for some time yet and deserve pay deals that reflect that.**

While the Strait is officially open, industry experts warn that it will be months before shipping volumes will return to pre-war levels.¹⁰ Ensuring the passage is free from mines could in itself take up to 50 days, and that's before shippers and insurance companies feel confident enough to sign off on the journey,¹¹

This means that there will be no immediate relief from an energy-driven spike in inflation, with the Head of the German Bundesbank Joachim Nagel saying "no relief is in sight for the foreseeable future".¹²

At the time of writing, oil prices are around the \$80 mark. That's below the peaks of April, but still far above pre-war levels of around \$70 per barrel.

Oil prices are expected to remain above pre-war levels well into 2030



Facts and Figures



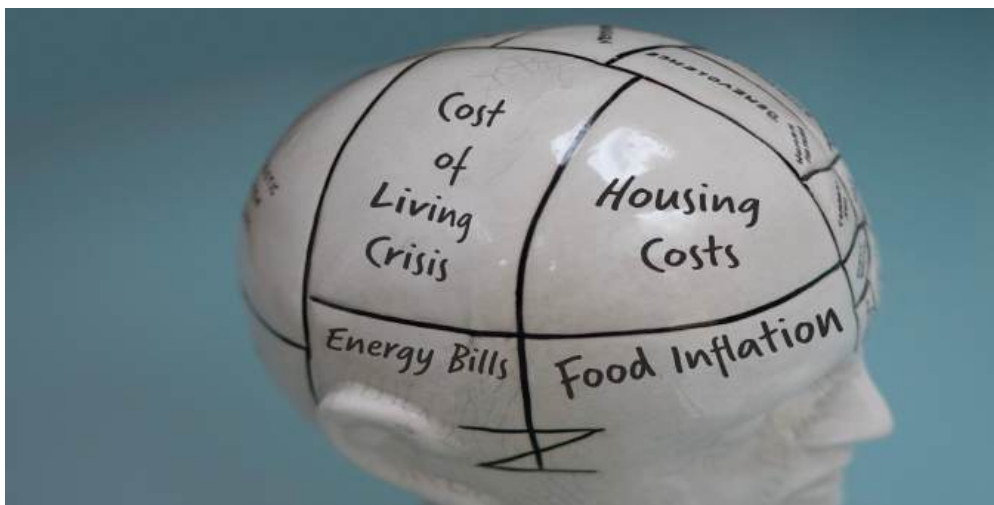
The futures market - which allows buyers to buy commodities in the future at a price agreed today - still prices oil at above pre-war levels well into 2030.¹³

Experts warn that even when the Strait of Hormuz is fully open and safe to pass through, a "risk premium" of up \$5-\$10 per barrel will remain baked into the price for the foreseeable future.¹⁴

The premium is a result of traders demanding a higher return of the greater risk now associated with oil passing through the Strait, as well as oil-import countries building up a larger reserve to act as a buffer against any future energy crises.¹⁵

Also contributing is the fact that the world's largest economies had to draw down on their reserves to meet demand, resulting in oil stockpiles heading toward the lowest levels since at least 2003.¹⁶ Demand to replenish these reserves is likely to prop up oil prices even further.

So, with oil prices not set to recover for months to come, inflation is expected to remain high. Even under the Bank of England's (BoE) best case scenario, RPI inflation is still set to push 5% by the year-end.¹⁷



Although the BoE is widely expected to keep base rates steady at 3.75% in the upcoming committee meeting the day after Facts & Figures is published, most traders expect a rise by year-end.¹⁸ And inflation being consistently above target only increases the likelihood of a hike being implemented. Even a small increase of just 0.25% could see the annual cost of a typical mortgage rising by £450 per year.¹⁹

What's clear is that workers' will continue to be put out of pocket from what seem to be never-ending crisis. **The only way to keep up is by securing above-inflation pay deals through collective bargaining.**

What is happening to the cost of living and pay?

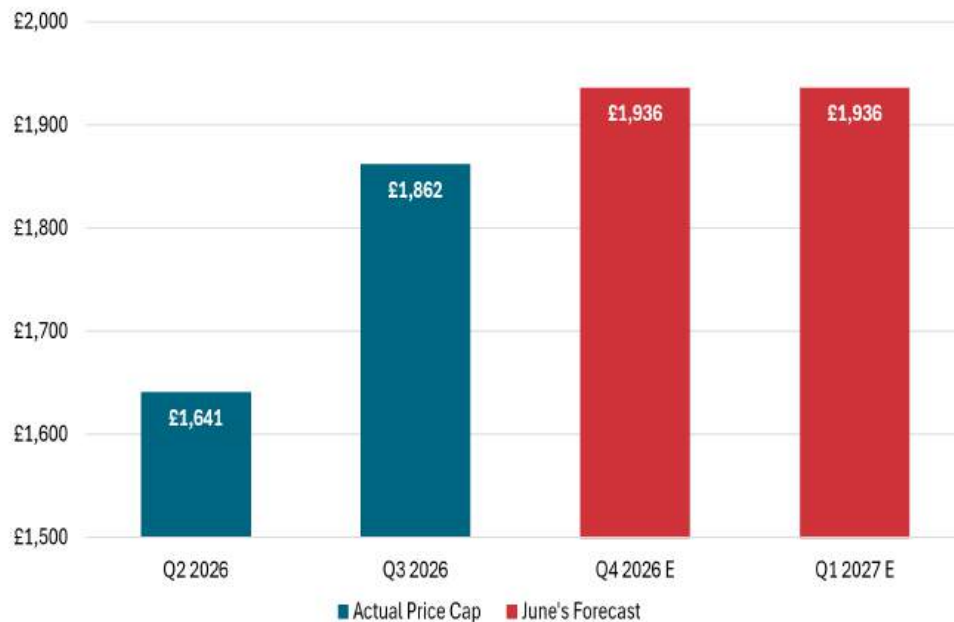
Facts and Figures

3.3 Ofgem has increased the energy price cap by £221, and suppliers expect it to rise a further £74 by year-end

After the government's £150 cut in April, the price cap fell to £1,641 per year. But that drop was only short lived with Ofgem now signing off on a 13% increase to the price cap, bringing it up to £1,862 per year for the typical household.²⁰

The energy price rises don't stop there though. EDF, British Gas, and E.on expect the cap to rise again by the end of the year to £1,936 from 1 October.²¹

Energy suppliers expect the price cap to hit £1,936 by year-end



So, towards the end of the year when energy usage is at its highest, suppliers are looking to charge the average household nearly £2,000 per year - a combined 18% increase compared to Q2 2026.

[Unite's Energy Profiteering Report](#) (October 2025) shows that energy companies made £30 billion in profit from UK energy in 2024.

That's around £500 per household, and a quarter of business energy bills.

Much of that profit is then handed over to the people that own these energy companies, with many of them located overseas.

In 2024, we estimate that UK gas users handed over £5.9 billion to the Norwegian state alone.



"Our energy system has been asset-stripped, sold off to foreign states, global multinationals and billionaires. Their basic business interest isn't investing for the long-term, or bringing down costs - it's extracting the maximum profit they can." Unite General Secretary, Sharon Graham

The average profit margin in the energy sector (23%) was three times higher than the economy-wide average in 2024

Energy is easily the most profitable sector of the UK economy. The average profit margin in the energy sector is 23%, which is three times higher than the economy-wide average in 2024.

With the cap yet again on the rise, these profit margins are likely to follow suit.

Massive profits were made across all four main sectors of the UK Energy System: gas extractors (£10.8 billion), electricity generators (£9.7 billion), the transmission and distribution Grid monopolies (£6.8 billion), and retail suppliers (£2.8 billion).



Unite's proposal to sort out this market-driven mess is **public ownership**.

In [Unite's 2023 report](#), we estimated the overall costs of renationalisation, including if the taxpayer were to buy back the system assets at their "book value", would be less than three years worth of current energy profits. We estimated a book value of £90 billion, including all energy system assets, such as the North Sea, generation facilities, and the Grid.

Unite also proposed other measures to end corporate profiteering of the energy sector, including:

- Properly funding GB Energy so it can fully invest in new generation projects, whilst creating tens of thousands of new good jobs.
- Maintaining a public stake in green energy projects which the UK directly benefits from.



We must also organise to build a sectoral collective bargaining to deliver good pay and conditions

While we ask the UK government for public ownership through renationalisation, we must also organise to build a stronger workers' voice. This means **sectoral collective bargaining**.

The high-profit companies in the energy industry must deliver decent pay and good conditions for their workers.

We must organise for:

- Sectoral collective bargaining to deliver good pay and conditions in new renewable generation industries
- A genuine workers' transition for North Sea workers as the UK moves to Net Zero: "No Ban Without A Plan"
- A significant pay rise for energy workers, and improvements in terms and conditions, including the re-opening of final salary pension schemes.

"Our proposals are simple and clear. Take back control with public ownership.

Start with the Grid, and with a properly sized Great British Energy.

It's time to close the chapter on deregulated market madness.

That's the foundation we need for a genuine industrial strategy.

Now it's down to us, the workers, to make it happen." Unite

General Secretary, Sharon Graham



3.4 Myth busting supermarket claims that soaring food prices are out of their hands

In a recent interview, Sainsbury's former CEO Justin King, has claimed that supermarkets aren't profiteering and that wages have kept pace with food prices. Supermarkets across the UK have echoed this sentiment, recently lashing out at proposed plans from the government to introduce price caps on groceries.

But when compared to the facts, many of the claims made by Justin King and the like simply don't add up.

Myth: Food prices and wages have risen at the same rate, so food isn't more expensive

Reality: Food prices have risen 1.4 times higher than wages since 2021

Since 2021 food prices have risen around 1.4 times more than wages.

On top of this, food inflation is expected to hit 10% by the end of the year - meaning prices will have gone up 50% since 2021.²²

This is particularly relevant, given that supermarkets keep prices high after inflation, despite falling wholesale prices.

Using over 30 years of data, the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit "found that on average, six months after a food price shock, only 1 per cent of the original price increase unwinds".²³



Facts and Figures

Myth: Food prices in the UK are much cheaper than Europe

Reality: It isn't that simple. Many food items in the UK are far more expensive than the rest of Europe

Whether UK prices are cheaper than Europe depends on where and what you look at. A BBC report from 2023 for example found that a grocery basket in the UK was more expensive than Germany and the Netherlands, and about the same as Italy and Spain, while more expensive than France. So it's not the case that food in the UK is "much cheaper" than the rest of Europe as industry bosses make out.

Ketchup, toilet paper, mayonnaise, butter, and cheese are just a few items that are more expensive in the UK.²⁴

Food prices in the UK have also increased more over the last five years than any other European country. Between November 2020-2025, food prices as measured have gone up 3% more in the UK compared to Europe.²⁵

Myth: Supermarkets aren't part of the problem - cost rises are out of their hands

Reality: Supermarkets have maintained their margins so they can reward shareholders - all while their customers suffer

Many costs *have* gone up. Energy and fuel companies are profiteering off the back of yet another crisis. BP's profits have more than doubled to £2.4 billion in the first quarter of 2026 due the higher oil prices caused by the Iran war.

But supermarkets like Tesco *are* part of the problem. They simply pass on these cost rises to customers, maintaining their profit margins to reward shareholders while their customers suffer. Tesco made £3.2 billion profit in the year to February 2026, its highest this decade. It paid £2.5 billion out to shareholders. Its margin did drop - but only slightly - to 4.3% from 4.5%.

Earlier this year the boss of Filippo Berio said supermarkets are "taking the mickey" out of shoppers. He said his firm had cut the price they charge supermarkets like Tesco twice last year. But he says the prices Tesco and other supermarkets are charging shoppers haven't fallen by the same amount.



Myth: Supermarket dividends are paid into UK pension funds that benefit us

Reality: The majority of supermarkets are owned by overseas investors with limited links to UK pension funds

Justin King also defended profits made by UK supermarkets by saying that this meant that UK pension funds get paid dividends via their shareholdings.

This argument is often made by business lobbyists to defend profits, whether they are made by supermarkets, energy firms or banks. We are told that because our pension funds invest in these companies we benefit when they make money too. But does the claim really stack up?

It's actually more complicated than King suggests. The ownership of UK supermarkets is now highly international, with large stakes held by foreign billionaires, sovereign wealth funds and global asset managers. While it's true UK pension funds are among the beneficiaries of supermarket profits, they are only one of many and there is little evidence that they are the dominant one.



Let's look first at the two companies King named: Sainsbury's and Tesco.

The first example is particularly bad news for King's argument. If we look at the top five investors in Sainsbury's, that between them control over a third of the shares (33.8%) worth over £2.3 billion, none are UK pension funds in their own right.

The top three are an investment vehicle run by a Czech billionaire (who also owns Royal Mail), the sovereign wealth fund of Qatar and a US asset manager.

It's only when we get down to BlackRock, a global asset manager, that potentially significant dividends will get passed through to its UK pension fund clients. But even then it's possible more of its clients invested in Sainsbury's are in the US and get most of the dividends.

Facts and Figures

Shareholder	(%)	Value (£m)	Type of Investor	UK Benefit
Vesa Equity Investment	10.60	708.5	Czech billionaire	Nil
Qatar Holding LLC	7.01	468.5	Sovereign Wealth Fund	Nil
Pzena Investment Management	6.60	441.2	US-based asset manager	Slight
Bestway Group UK Ltd.	5.32	335.4	Private UK company	None
BlackRock	4.32	288.7	US-based asset manager	Little
Total	33.85	2,262.3		

Table 1: Top five shareholders of J Sainsbury plc. Source: Capital IQ Pro.

It's a similar story at Tesco.

Three of the top five investors are US-based asset managers that hold 14% of the shares. Again, some of the dividends paid will feed through to UK pension fund clients, but much of the money will go elsewhere.

Shareholder	(%)	Value (£m)	Type of Investor	UK Benefit
BlackRock	8.28	2,385.4	US-based asset manager	Little
Vanguard Capital Mgmt	3.07	886.0	US-based asset manager	Little
Massachusetts Financial Services Co.	2.70	779.0	US-based asset manager	Little
Tesco PLC, ESOP	2.69	774.4	UK employee share ownership scheme	Employees
HSBC Global Asset Mgmt (UK)	2.62	755.5	US-based asset manager	Little
Total	19.36	5,580.3		

Table 2: Top five shareholders of Tesco plc. Source: Capital IQ Pro.



Other Tesco shareholders that will receive dividends include:

- The Norwegian sovereign wealth fund
- The Kuwaiti sovereign wealth fund
- The Singapore sovereign wealth fund
- The Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund
- China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange

Morrisons is owned by a US private equity firm, ASDA is owned privately by two brothers backed by another US private equity firm. Aldi and Lidl are both owned by German families. No UK pension funds there!

The reality is far more complicated than King's claim that supermarket profits mean dividends for UK pension funds. In fact, much of the money goes to billionaires, private equity firms and states such as Qatar, Singapore, Kuwait and China. It's a very weak defence of huge profits, whether they are made by supermarkets or employers in other sectors.

3.5 France can cap prices, why can't we?

When oil prices spiked at the outbreak of war in the Middle East, French energy giant TotalEnergies did something unusual: it capped its petrol price in France. The multinational bent to public and political pressure. **Time for the same thing here.**

The cap is €1.99 a litre for petrol and €2.25 for diesel, which had seen particularly sharp price increases following the conflict. Customers with a TotalEnergies gas or electricity contract also got a cap of €1.99/litre regardless of fuel type, including on motorways, throughout 2026. The cap has been extended monthly since March.



Facts and Figures

The cap on petrol is slightly above the average UK price but the diesel price, particularly important for workers where driving is a big part of the job, provides a real benefit.

The French Prime Minister publicly called on TotalEnergies to share its profits with consumers. Previous protests over fuel and other costs by the “gilets jaunes” (meaning “yellow vests”, or hi-vis tops) trod similar ground.

It's in stark contrast to the UK where the Government raised concerns about the high price of fuel, food and other goods. UK businesses have said they won't play ball.

TotalEnergies framed its cap as protecting customers from "exceptional market volatility." It shows that a major energy company, posting record profits, can choose to keep prices down when it values its customers.

This isn't a quirk of French regulation. TotalEnergies is a highly profitable international energy company accountable to its shareholders. It is performing well enough to absorb a short-term reduction in its profit margin to shield its customers from economic pain. But so are BP and Shell.

The lesson is not limited to petrol prices. Companies choose prices, wages, dividends and margins, those choices are shaped by power.

When the UK Government suggested voluntary capping of prices of key food items like eggs and milk, business leaders were vocally opposed.

Former Ocado chair and Conservative Lord Stuart Rose said: *"I think the whole idea is the stuff of nonsense and it will never fly. This smacks of state control, it's idiotic, it's dangerous, and it'll never work."*

Stuart Machin, chief executive of Marks & Spencer, said any move to cap food prices was *"completely preposterous"*.

But the TotalEnergies example demonstrates that voluntary price caps are possible. So why haven't they taken off in the UK?

In France previous protests fed into political pressure that made the calculation tip one way. In Britain, it hasn't yet.

UK employers band together when they feel their profit margins are threatened. **They understand the importance of collective action. Workers must do likewise.**

The TotalEnergies example demonstrates that different outcomes are possible. Companies can and do absorb costs and reduce margins when needed. Whether they do depends on the balance of power.



By working together through combines and other networks, Reps can build their own collective power to change company decisions on pay, prices and profits and ensure that workers get their fair share.

3.6 Pensions crisis: Fewer than one in ten are set for a comfortable retirement

Fewer than one in ten workers are likely to have a comfortable retirement with the large majority only having saved enough for a minimal income, according to the pension industry lobby group Pensions UK.

Pensions UK models three categories of retirement income: Minimum, Moderate and Comfortable. The benchmark is intended to help people assess the lifestyle they expect in retirement and how much saving is required in order to achieve this. It considers everyday costs across spending categories such as food, household bills and transport, as well as social activities and hobbies.

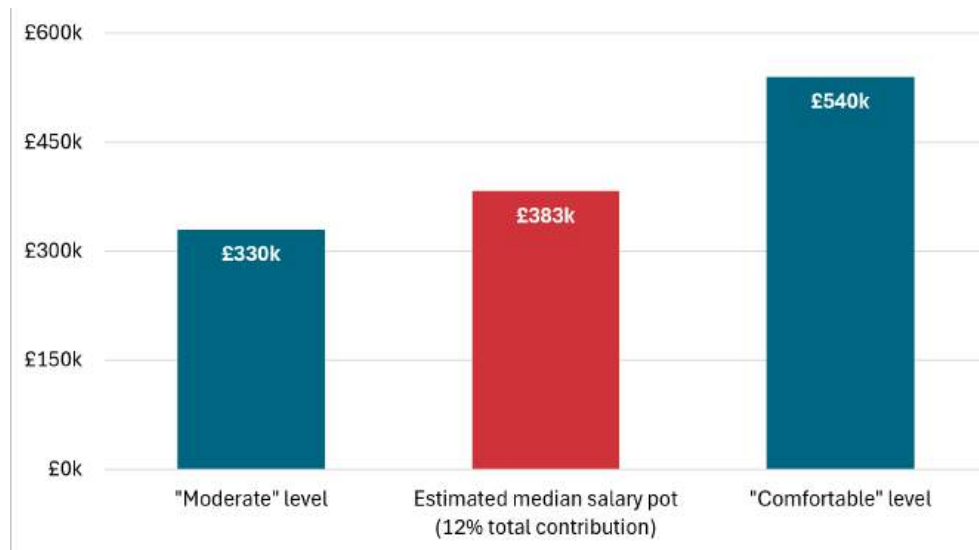
The benchmark was updated in June and shows that a Minimum retirement lifestyle now costs £13,900 a year for a one-person household and £22,500 for two people. A Moderate lifestyle costs £32,700 for one person or £45,400 for two, while a Comfortable lifestyle costs £45,400 and £62,700 respectively.

Based on current savings patterns, Pensions UK expects 82% of the working population to reach even the Minimum standard of living in retirement, with just 23% reaching a Moderate standard and only 9% reaching a Comfortable level.

To achieve the Moderate income level Pensions UK estimates this would require a pension pot at retirement of between £330,000 and £490,000. To reach the Comfortable level would require a pot of between £540,000 and £800,000.

To put this into perspective, we estimated the value of a median worker's pension pot at 67, based on a median starting salary of £27,500 and combined contributions of 12%

Facts and Figures



These figures show that the pensions offered by many employers currently fall a long way short of adequate. It also demonstrates why Reps need to push for higher contributions from employers and for these to be calculated on full pay rather than qualifying earnings.

Working together through combines, Reps can compare best practice and identify the employers that are falling short. **Together we can win better pensions for workers.**

3.7 Meanwhile, the number of pension schemes available has reached a decade low

Pensions are not a gift from bosses, but instead deferred wages that should allow workers to live a good life in retirement. However, new data from The Pensions Regulator shows that pensions are under attack.

With the UK state pension already being one of the lowest in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, workers need to fight back and demand that their bosses pay their fair share into a good workplace pension scheme.



Since 2012, the number of defined benefit (DB) and hybrid schemes have continually declined at an annual rate of 3%. To put this into context, only 5,060 schemes were available by 2024 - down almost a third from the 7,300 schemes in 2012.²⁶

On top of this, membership in private DB and hybrid schemes has also declined to a decade low with just 9,174,000 members, and only a minority of these schemes are still open to new members.

This makes it even more crucial to fight for better pensions in the workplace. Ultimately, pensions are not a gift but money workers have earned through years of work.

3.8 Pensions fightback: contributions being calculated on full pay is an easy way to beat the 'qualifying earnings' penalty

Last month we reported on successful action by Unite members working for Bilfinger, a large German Offshore contractor, to get higher pension contributions out of the employer.

Previously contributions were calculated on 'qualifying earnings'. But by acting together the workers successfully moved the employer to calculate them on full pay. It's a really important example others can follow.

As we've explored previously in Facts & Figures, the contribution rates in defined contribution (DC) pension schemes have a huge impact on final retirement income. So **Reps should be looking to increase contribution rates whenever possible.**

But sometimes the headline contribution rates, expressed as a percentage of salary, don't tell the whole story.

Facts and Figures

Many schemes calculate employer and employee contributions on qualifying earnings rather than full pay.

This is the portion of salary between the lower earnings limit (£6,240) and upper limit (£50,270). This is the statutory basis for auto-enrolment into pension schemes, meaning that this model is quite widespread.

Under auto-enrolment the minimum an employer can contribute is 3% and the employee 5%.

But two workers auto-enrolled into pension schemes with the same headline 3% and 5% contribution structure could have very different levels of actual contributions paid depending on the calculation basis.

Let's imagine two workers on a salary of £30,000. The impact of using qualifying earnings to calculate contributions is shown in the table below.

Contribution basis	Employer contribution (3%)	Employee contribution (5%)	Total contributions
Full pay	£900	£1,500	£2,400
Qualifying earnings	£713	£1,188	£1,901

Table 3: Result of pension based on qualifying earnings versus full pay

In the first case the employer calculates contributions on full pay and the headline contribution rates (3% employer, 5% employee) tell us exactly what will be paid in.

- The total annual employer contribution is $£30,000 \times 3\% = £900$
- The total annual employee contribution is $£30,000 \times 5\% = £1,500$
- The overall total is $£900 + £1,500 = £2,400$

In the second case the worker earns the same salary but contributions are calculated based on qualifying earnings, above the lower earnings limit. Here the calculation is based on salary minus the lower earnings limit: $£30,000 - £6,240 = £23,760$.

- The total annual employer contribution is $£23,760 \times 3\% = £713$
- The total annual employee contribution is $£23,760 \times 5\% = £1,188$
- The overall total is $£713 + £1,188 = £1,901$

In the second case the total amount being paid into the pension is almost £500 a year lower despite the headline contribution rate being the same.



That's almost 21% lower. This would inevitably lead to a significantly lower final pension.

Unfortunately, this hits lower-paid workers the hardest.

This is because the lower earnings limit represents a much larger share of a low earner's wage so less of their pay counts when calculating contribution rates.

For a worker earning the National Minimum Wage of around £24,500 calculating contributions using qualifying earnings rather than full pay means only £18,260 counts.

That would reduce the amount paid into their pension by 25.5%. This is because the lower earnings limit accounts for more than a quarter of their total earnings.

As the National Minimum Wage rises, more of the lowest earners' pay is being pulled above the threshold but the structural penalty remains.

Reps should check which basis applies in their workplace and push for contributions to be calculated on full pay.

This is the simplest and most effective way to increase what actually goes into the pension without changing the headline rate.

And as the workers at Bilfinger have just shown it's a fight that we can win.

3.9 Bite-sized Bargaining: Increased social care, child care, and leisure costs add to workers burden

Unite backs its members who fight collectively for inflation-busting pay in the workplaces and sectors. See below for a compiled cost-of-living and real terms pay articles in our previous issues to strengthen your negotiations.

- **Use Financial Insider to discover whether real-terms pay at your company has kept pace with inflation.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/2585t624> or look in the September 2024 edition, p.134-135.
- **CPI and CPIH both short-change workers when used instead of RPI.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/2wujk5s2> or look in the June 2025 edition, p.54-57.
- **The UK is the most expensive country for childcare in Europe, with costs for an under two-year-olds rising by 43% in the last**

Facts and Figures

decade. Find out more here: tinyurl.com/2bcvj8hc or look in the May 2024 edition, p.49-51.

- **Social care has been mostly privatised, running for profit and costs its patients over £60,000 a year.** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/2xu66av4 or look in the August 2024 edition, p.33-35.
- **The lowest paid workers are experiencing the highest rate of inflation** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/uccet97z or look in the April 2024 edition, p.51-52.
- **The rising cost of living has made personal leisure a privilege as workers have had to prioritise bills and food.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/4nu8vvbd> or look in the December 2024 edition, p.32.
- **Since 1977, the income gap between the top and bottom income groups is continuing to widen.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/3t9ep345> or look in the October 2024 edition, p.45-47.

Heathrow bosses!

END POVERTY PAY

WORKERS CAN'T GET BY



#HALStrike

Unite, fighting for Jobs. Pay. Conditions.





SECTION FOUR

ABILITY TO PAY

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How much money are employers making?

Facts and Figures

How much money are employers making?

Put simply: huge profits and dividends show that firms have the ability to pay.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



4. How much money are employers making?

4.1 Quarterly results update: firms have raked in profits of £730 billion in just three months despite the Iran war

In last month's Fact & Figures, we analysed the results of firms worldwide who had recently published quarterly results. Now that a month has passed, even more firms have declared how well they've done over the three months that include the Iran war.

We can now analyse the results for 2,181 firms on the world's largest stock exchanges, up from 1,952 last month.

New entrants to our analysis on the London Stock Exchange include the likes of National Grid, Nationwide, and BT. These new 44 firms that have recently published results raked in a staggering £28.7 billion in profit at a very healthy margin of 14.2%.

Across all seven stock exchanges we analysed, average profit margins were higher than the same three month period last year. In other words, firms are relatively more profitable now than they were 12 months ago - despite the pleas of costs going through the roof due to the Iran war.

Net profit margin	Same Quarter 2025	Latest Quarter
LSE	12.8%	14.2%
NASDAQ	18.6%	19.7%
NYSE	8.8%	9.3%
ENX	9.7%	10.5%
SEHK	14.2%	14.8%
TSE	5.6%	6.2%
SZSE	6.1%	6.9%

Table 4: Net profit margins at major stock exchanges. Source: S&P Capital IQ Pro.

The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) raked in the highest profits, with 899 firms reporting a combined £271.7 billion in just three months.

The tech-filled NASDAQ came in at a close second, despite only 435 firms reporting results. Combined the NASDAQ generated over £262 billion in net profit, led by the likes of Alphabet, Nvidia, and Microsoft.

Facts and Figures

4.2 The UK's big 4 banks made profits of £11 billion in just three months, yet are still complaining that UK taxes are too high

Unite members at Barclays have paved the way with an agenda setting pay award in the finance sector. Following negotiations between Unite and the bank, thousands of employees secured an above-inflation pay rise - putting on display the power of collective bargaining in the workplace.

This bumper pay deal comes as the UK's Big 4 banks have all posted results, revealing that ability to pay in the sector is at record-highs.

Net interest income is the main income figure that banks use. It's the difference between interest banks earn on money they lend out, and the interest they pay on money customers have deposited at the bank.

When interest rates rise, so does net interest income.

£m	Q1 2025	Q1 2026
HSBC	6,592	6,638
Barclays	3,517	3,737
Lloyds	3,204	3,484
NatWest	3,026	3,394
TOTAL	16,339	17,252

Table 5: Net interest income at the UK's Big 4 Banks in £m

In large part, the across the board increases are down to the Bank of England's decision to hold interest rates steady, rather than the cuts that many traders had previously priced in.

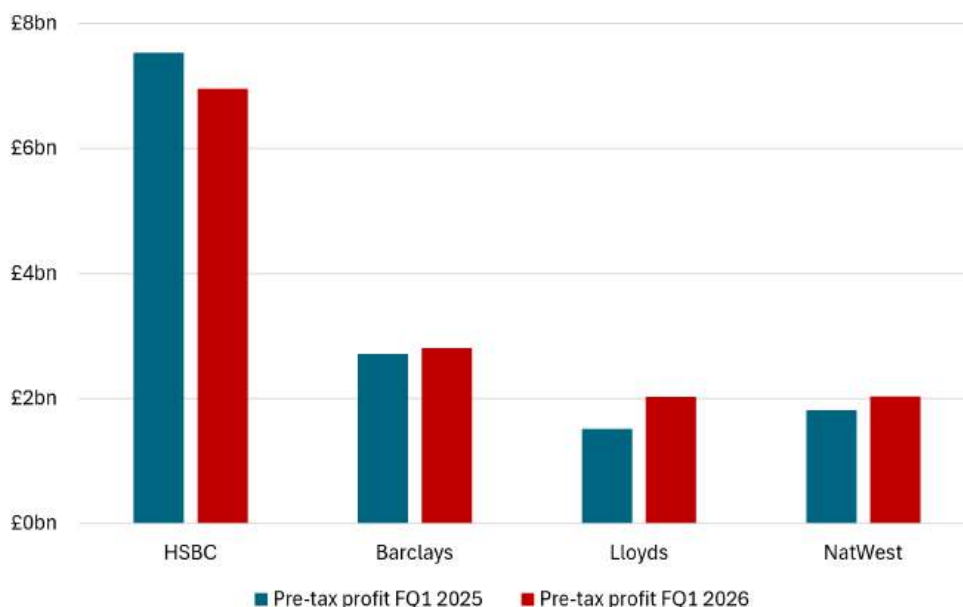
As a reminder, when interest rates are high it puts a dent in everyone's pocket through higher interest payments on mortgages, loans, and debt. Banks, on the other hand, benefit from high rates as it boosts their interest income.

NatWest, for example, has seen its net interest income rise 12% compared to the same period last year and now expects it's full year income to be at the top end of its previous forecast.²⁷

Unsurprisingly, the boosted income has fed through to higher profits, with the Big 4 raking in a combined £13.8 billion in pre-tax profit in just three months.



The UK's Big 4 Banks have made £14 billion in profit before tax so far



HSBC led the way, reporting just under £7 billion in pre-tax profit. Despite the eye-watering amount, its profits took a \$400 million hit after it indirectly lent money to mortgage lender MFS, which recently collapsed.²⁸

Barclays also took a hit, totalling £228 million, but its profits still climbed 3% in what it's CEO called a "solid quarter" and announced new shareholder payouts of £500 million.²⁹

Lloyds saw the highest growth, with its profits soaring 33%, while NatWest's grew 12%.

Despite huge profits and the government scrapping plans to increase corporation taxes on banks, they are still complaining that they pay too much tax.³⁰

The figures we reported on above *are* pre-tax, but even if you look at the bottom-line results, they're far from struggling. Combined, the Big 4 made over £10.7 billion in profit in the first three months of the year.

It's only right that banks pay their fair share of taxes, especially considering that it was taxpayer's money that bailed them out back in 2008 when they were on the brink of going bust.

Yet now, the regulations that were put in place post financial crash to prevent another crisis are being relaxed in favour of even more profit.

Facts and Figures

In the UK, HSBC, Barclays, and Standard Chartered are all set to see the amount of money they're required to hold in reserve to act as a safety cushion fall. This means they'll be able to lend out up to \$400 billion more between them, \$200 billion of which has already been lent.³¹

The easing of these regulations is nothing new though. Regular readers of Facts & Figures will remember that the Bank of England loosened the rules on bankers' bonuses at the end of last year.

The change cut the time that senior bankers must wait before receiving their full bonuses down from eight to four years, which they say was in an attempt to boost UK competitiveness. Now, senior bankers receive part of their bonus within a year and are allowed to pocket dividends on share-based bonuses while they are deferred.³²

This is great timing - if you're a banker - considering UK bank bosses' pay just hit its highest level in more than a decade.³³

Barclays' boss pocketed over £15 million while HSBC and NatWest both paid out £6.6 million to their executive, and Lloyds £7.4 million.³⁴



This makes it clear - banks will stop at nothing to continually take home more and more profit. And it's usually at the expense of everyday workers through higher mortgage payments and debt interest.

The sector-leading win delivered by the Finance Combine at Barclays shows that inflation-busting deals are possible.

Through organising in the workplace and collective bargaining, Unite members can fight back against bad bosses pushing below-inflation pay deals. The ability to pay is clearly there, and as members at Barclays have shown, workers can get their fair share.

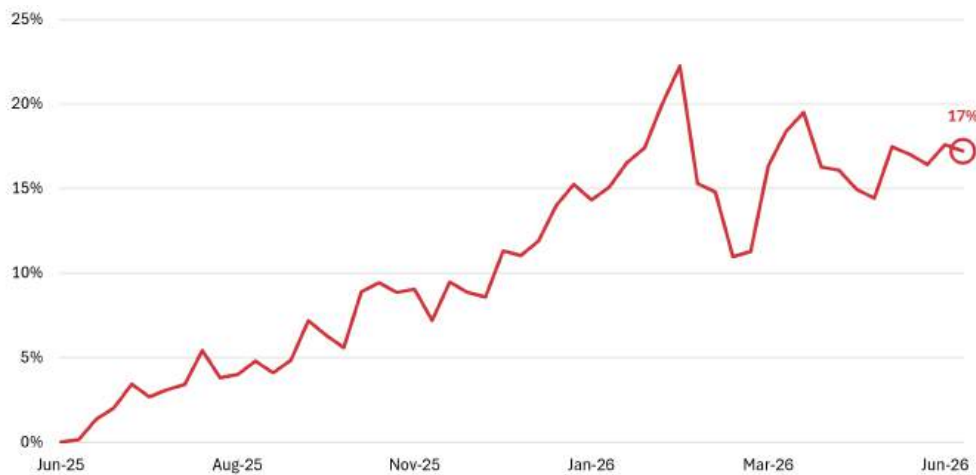


4.3 Stock markets have surged in response to the US-Iran deal

Stock markets have surged in response to the US and Iran reaching an agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. With investors piling back into stocks, ability to pay is also on the rise.

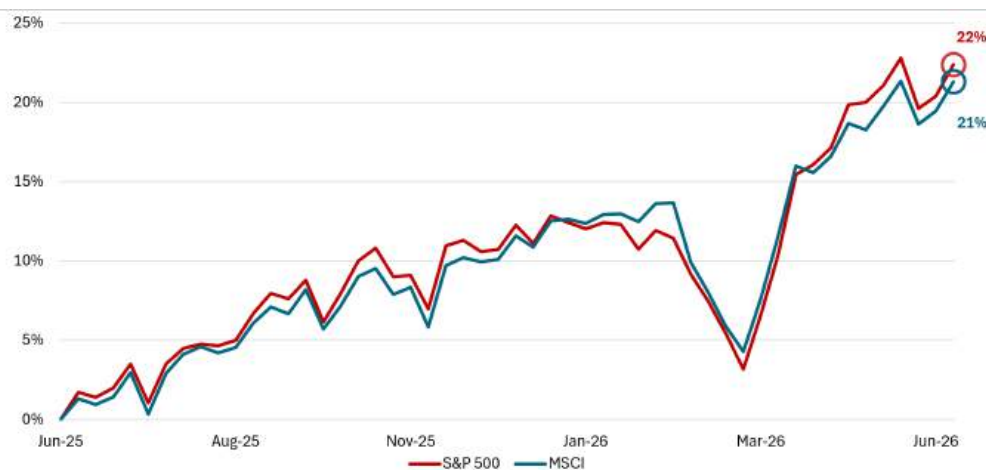
The FTSE 350, which contains some of the biggest UK-listed firms, is up 17% compared to this time last year.

The FTSE 350 is up 17% compared to this time last year



Overseas, the same is true. America's S&P 500 and the global MSCI index reveal that share prices of firms across the world are up compared to pre-war times.

The S&P 500 and MSCI world indexes are up 22% and 21%



When share prices are rising like this, it usually means that **ability to pay** is also on the up.

How much money are employers making?

Facts and Figures

4.4 Bite-sized Bargaining: Ability to pay

Previous editions of Facts & Figures have identified how companies maximise profits and the methods they use.

- **Unite has identified five main forms of profiteering, including windfall profits.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/2dvcbwa6> or look in the March 2024 edition, p.76-80.
- **Companies paying dividends and share buybacks to shareholders indicates there is money for workers.** Find out more here: <http://tinyurl.com/3e3f3wv6> or look in the March 2024 edition, p. 235-236.
- **Companies will use various different measures of profit but the main measures are explained here:**<https://tinyurl.com/4z6jfbwc> or look in the February 2024 edition, p.73-74.
- **Explainer: Why you can use group profits to back up pay demands:** <https://tinyurl.com/yerzms8> or look in the June 2025 edition, p.83-85.
- **Companies listed on the world's largest stock exchanges made over £2.2 trillion in profit in 2024.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/ye237yha> or look in the October 2025 edition, p.70-71
- **Unite Reps have been using stock market analyst research to reinforce the ability to pay argument.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/4tnnvdtf> or look in the March 2025 edition, p.73-74

Use Work Voice Pay's Financial Insider tool to generate a report about your employer's finances. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yhk7y344>.

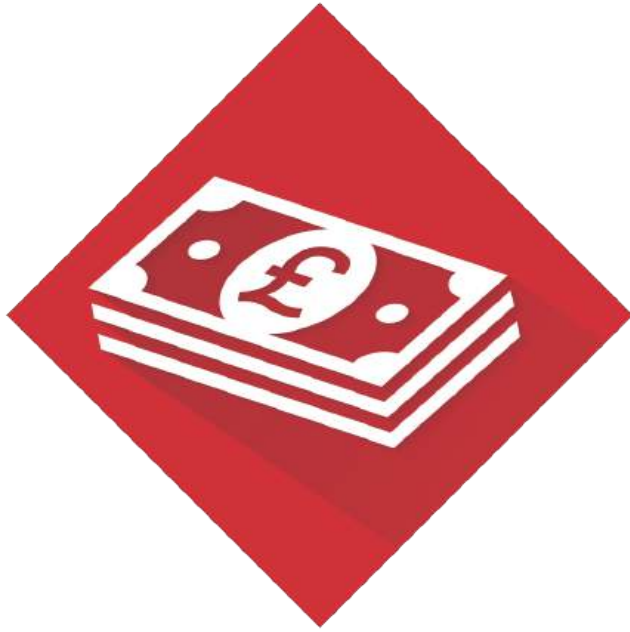
Contact Unite's forensic accounts team for a bespoke analysis of your employer's finances. forensic.accounts@unitetheunion.org



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CAPITALISM

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JOBS AND HOMES FOR ALL
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SECTION FIVE

ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

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5.1	UK investment levels are at historical lows and far below the G7	64
5.2	Reps' guide to IPOs: what are they, and who are the decision makers involved?	65
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Facts and Figures

Workers earn less today in real terms than they did in 1997, and the divide between the rich and the rest of us is growing ever wider. We need to fix our broken economy right now and not allow growth targets to be used as an excuse for a smokescreen for fresh rounds of austerity.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



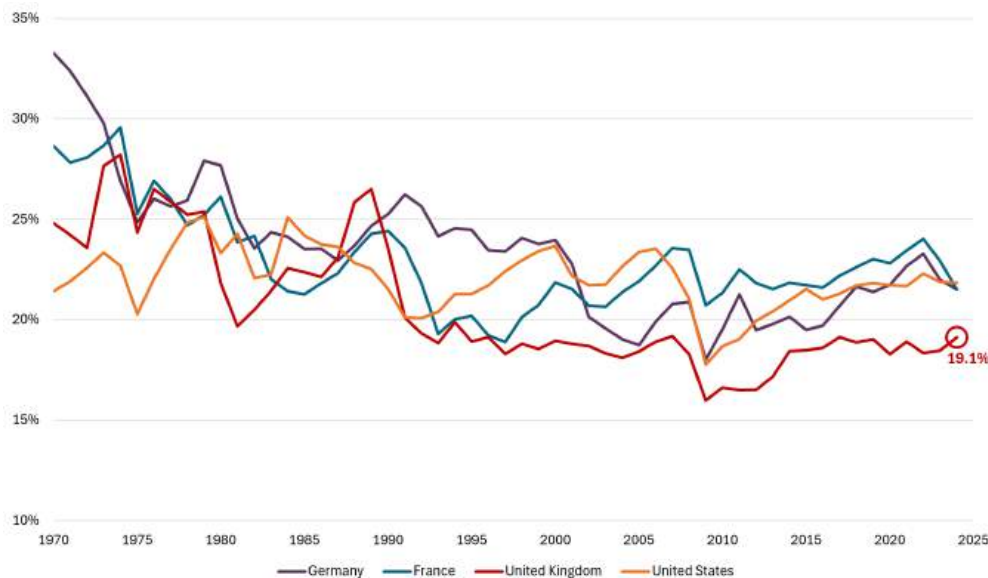
5. What is happening to the economy and labour market?

5.1 UK investment levels are at historical lows and far below the G7

Investment rates have been declining internationally for decades, but this is particularly true for the UK where investment is now significantly lower than its G7 peers.

The latest data from the World Bank shows that the UK's investment as a percentage of GDP is just 19% - far lower than in the 1970's when it averaged 25%.³⁵ It isn't just at historical lows either - the UK has consistently invested far less than other G7 countries, which includes peers like the USA, Germany, and France.

UK investment continually declines and is lower than other G7 countries



Because of this, we have decline and stagnation in our core manufacturing industries and public services.

Investment picked up slightly at year-end - totalling 19.7% of GDP - but it still remains the lowest in the G7.³⁶ Years of underinvestment has left the UK struggling to keep up. To match the highest investment rate in the G7, Japan, the UK would need to invest £180-£200 billion extra every year.³⁷

Facts and Figures

Public sector investment isn't filling the gap either. In the UK, public sector investment is just 2.7% of GDP, well below the 3.7% average for advanced OECD economies since the turn of the century.³⁸

5.2 Reps' guide to IPOs: what are they, and who are the decision makers involved?

Chances are, you've heard in the news that Elon Musk's SpaceX was recently listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange, making the anti-union weirdo a trillionaire in the process. Truly, life is not fair. **But what is an IPO, who are the decision-makers involved, and why is it important for bargaining?**

What is an IPO?

In simple terms, an Initial Public Offering (or "IPO") is a way for companies to sell their shares directly to the public. In doing so, they become "listed" on a stock exchange and their shares can be bought and sold by anyone with the cash.



What's the point?

One of the main benefits of an IPO is how much easier it is for companies to raise huge amounts of finance. Private companies rely on banks and creditors for loans, which are often costly and difficult to raise, in addition to whatever their owners will invest.

Listing allows the company to sell its shares to the whole world. Thousands of investors can all buy pieces of the company, allowing huge amounts of finance to be raised in a short time frame.

SpaceX's IPO, for example, sold 556 million shares in the company, raising over \$85 billion in funding for the company.³⁹



Who makes it happen?

So that's they why and the what. But how does a company make that happen in the first place?

Once management has decided that it would be beneficial to go public, the first step is to appoint underwriters. Underwriters are typically huge investment banks - the likes of **Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan**. Their role is to act as the middle man between the company and investors.

Underwriters & Investment Banks

Typically, there are two types of underwriting agreements.

- In the first type, the underwriter agrees to purchase all of the shares on offer themselves which they then sell on to the public. This means they take all the risk of the shares not selling⁴⁰
- The second type sees the underwriter sell the shares directly to the public on behalf of the company. This is generally seen as less favourable as there's no guarantee that the business will sell enough shares to raise the finance it originally aimed for.⁴¹

In return, underwriters receive compensation based on how many shares they managed to sell - usually between 5% and 7% of the total sale proceeds.⁴²

Accountants & Auditors

Once an underwriter is appointed, the company then needs to get its financials in order. Listed companies have to meet more stringent regulations, as their shares are held by the public.



To do this, the financial statements are audited by an accountancy firm. This is usually one of the big 4 - **KPMG, Deloitte, PwC, or EY**.

Facts and Figures

The auditors come in and ensure that the reported financials are legitimate and comply with accounting standards.

This step is particularly important as the price that the shares are sold for will be heavily influenced by the company's financials. The company can't go public if the auditor's haven't signed off on the accounts.⁴³

Market regulators

Once everything is in order, the company produces what is known as a prospectus. It includes details on the IPO and everything about the company - from what it does, its financial performance, through to details on the directors and management of the company.

This prospectus is filed with the regulator that oversees IPO's - the **Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in the UK or the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) over in the US**. They review it to ensure it contains all the information investors need to make their decision about whether to invest or not.

Once everything is approved, the prospectus is made available to the public and management and the underwriters will usually go on "roadshows" to promote the company's IPO in an attempt to win institutional investors over.⁴⁴



Institutional investors and hedge funds

Based on how persuasive they were, **institutional investors - the likes of BlackRock and Vanguard** - commit to buying a certain amount of shares before they've even gone public. Typically, 90% of shares are allocated to institutional investors, with the remainder available to retail investors.⁴⁵

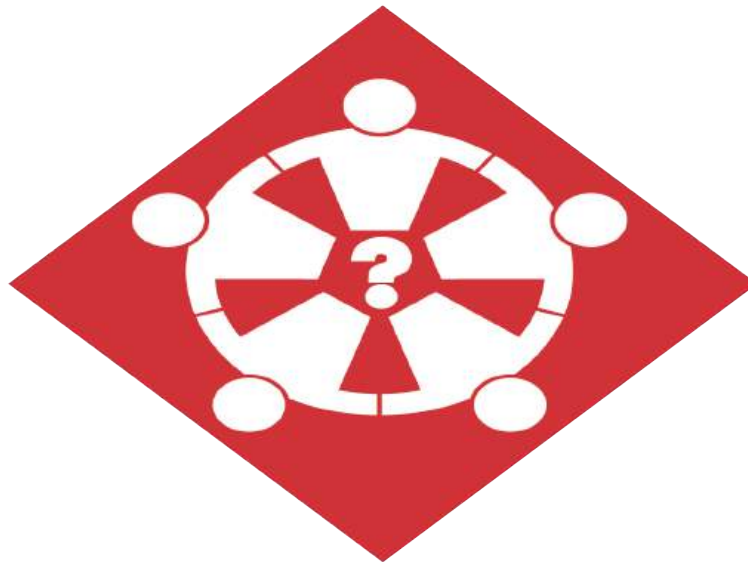


In SpaceX's example though, Musk planned to allocate 20% of shares to retail investors, looking to benefit from his "cult-like following".⁴⁶

After the listing day, the newly public company's shares are traded on a stock exchange daily. Investors buy and sell shares from each other, rather than directly from the company.

What does this mean for bargaining?

One of the biggest impacts of an IPO is on ownership. Private companies are usually owned by just a handful of investors. What this means is that each investor has a lot of sway over the direction of the firm - they can directly impact decisions made.



After going public, thousands of investors now own a stake in the company and have a say in how it's run. This means that ownership is "diluted".

A lot of the time, ownership will be so diluted that after an IPO there isn't one controlling party. This usually means that the board of directors and the CEO have far more power than in private companies.

In America, IPOs often work differently. The pre-existing shareholders sometimes retain control even after an IPO. Take Musk for example. He now has 42% of the shares in SpaceX, yet kept 82% of voting rights - so he can make decisions without other shareholders' approval.⁴⁷

This is crucial when it comes to bargaining, as the ones that decide whether or not a pay increase goes through often sit at the very top of the company.

Knowing who the ultimate decision-maker over pay is can help to swing pay deals in your favour.

Facts and Figures

5.3 Bite-sized Bargaining: Collective bargaining reduces inequality

Employers rely on our labour. Our members, through their union and collective bargaining, can shift the balance of power in the economy. Whether it's winning above-inflation pay rises, improving conditions, or securing a fair share of public investment, this is about building real market power from the ground up.

- **Studies show that greater union membership leads to money being distributed more evenly across society.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/382n83mf> or look in the March 2024 edition, p.210.
- **CMA studies show that without collective bargaining, concentrated labour markets reduce wages.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/bddn5x88> or look in the March 2024 edition, p.211.
- **Union power extends beyond its membership, with collective agreements covering 40% of the workforce, and we can increase this by organising more.** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/3akae4w7 or look in the March 2024 edition, p.208-209.
- **Government's failure on the economy is no excuse for employers offering poor pay deals.** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/4pxcmt4p or look in the April 2024 edition, p.110-111.
- **Investment is a collective bargaining issue where worker focused investment can benefit employers and employees.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/2wx2mtvj> or look in December 2023 p.182.
- **UK companies lag behind peers in comparable countries with far lower investment levels.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/4fpa8ytx> or look in November 2023 p.144-145.







SECTION SIX

WORKPLACE ISSUES

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What's happening in our workplaces?

Equality, safety, and decent conditions aren't extras. They're the basics. When workers stand together, we win better pay, safer jobs, and real equality. That's what Unite is built for.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



6. What's happening in our workplaces?

6.1 Know Your Rights: Working in the heat

Working in excessive heat can cause problems like heat stress, dehydration, fatigue and in severe cases heat stroke. If you are working outside you may be exposed to the risk of sunburn.

Climate change means that extreme weather is becoming more common. We know that unionised workplaces are healthier, safer workplaces, but what rights do you have when temperatures rise?

Maximum working temperature

There is currently NO legal maximum temperature for working in the UK.

HOWEVER, health and safety legislation does state that, during working hours the temperature in all indoor workplaces must be 'reasonable'.⁴⁸

The law also states that employers have general duties to ensure health and safety and to assess and control risks from work, including working in the heat.⁴⁹

Outdoor workers such as agricultural workers, currently rely on this general duty to protect workers from harm. Construction workers have additional legal protection, where employers must ensure that working conditions are "reasonable" and provide protection from adverse weather.

The law also gives workers some rights to not work in unsafe conditions and (in trade union recognised workplaces) for union health and safety reps to carry out inspections and make recommendations.⁵⁰

Your employer HAS a duty of care to you.



Facts and Figures

Assessing the risks

Employers should:⁵¹

- identify what could cause injury or illness in the workplace (hazards) - examples include heat generated by machinery or temperatures reached in the cab of a bus:
 - decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)
 - take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this is not possible, control the risk

Unite health and safety reps can:

- Negotiate a Working in Extreme Weather Agreement with the employer
- Create a safety check list that the worker can fill out prior to starting a job/process that is considered high risk
- Request any documents relevant to potential harm of workers, including risk assessments
- Inform management and discuss resolution of problems
- Negotiate a stop unsafe work procedure that enables reps/workers to stop the task in agreed circumstances, including if agreed hot weather will cause detrimental effects to health (see use of Section 44 ERA below)
- Regularly review conditions and processes with management

Reducing the risks

There are a number of steps an employer can take to keep you safe during hot weather. Your union reps can include these in any workplace agreement. These steps may include:

- Ensuring cooling systems are adequate and regularly maintained
- Monitoring temperature and humidity, and workers' responses
- Scheduling heavy work and tasks requiring personal protective equipment (PPE) for the cooler hours of the day
- Shortening the length of work periods and increasing the length of rest periods
- Halting work altogether under extreme conditions
- Scheduling outside tasks outside of 11am-3pm when UV radiation levels and temperatures are highest



- Providing cooling areas such as shade or air-conditioned rest rooms, for use while working or while on breaks
- Ensuring indoor workplaces are adequately ventilated
- Providing workers with free access to cool drinking water at all times
- Flexible working: Giving staff the chance to come in earlier or stay later to avoid the stifling and unpleasant conditions of the rush hour commute
- Temporarily relaxing their workplace dress codes
- Enabling staff to work from home
- Providing sunscreen
- Slowing work rates
- Regularly rotating staff out of hot environments
- Allowing longer recovery times after hot or exhausting work
- Educating workers about the early signs of heat stress
- If workers show any signs of heat exhaustion, then the employer should immediately ensure that they stop work and are allowed to recover or better are sent home without any loss of pay

Union health and safety reps can play a role in making sure measures like these are effectively enforced.

Your employer's duty of care extends both indoors and outside and when working from home.

Rights of union health and safety reps

All workplaces with a recognised trade union have the legal right to elect union health and safety reps. These are independent from the employer and are trained by the union to help keep you safe.

They have the right to:⁵²

- Take an active part in workplace risk assessments
- Investigate potential hazards and 'dangerous occurrences', and examine the accident book
- Investigate members' complaints
- Carry out inspections of the workplace in work time, at least every three months

Facts and Figures

- Require their employer to set up and attend a safety committee (where two or more safety reps request this)
- Be consulted on new working practices and new technology
- Receive safety information from their employer (e.g. inspectors' reports, hygiene surveys and risk assessments)
- Attend union-approved training courses without loss of pay
- Have access to facilities and paid time off work, both to carry out inspections and to meet staff and other safety reps

This is one of the main reasons unionised workplaces are safer and healthier than non-unionised ones.⁵³

Stopping work when it gets too hot

You may have a local agreement which sets a maximum temperature or a procedure for stopping when it gets too hot. If not, and you have Unite recognition, you should seek one.

Even without this you do have some rights. Sections 44 and 100 of the Employment Rights Act protects individuals who have left the workplace in circumstances of danger, which they 'reasonably' believe is imminent and cannot be averted. If you do 'reasonably' stop work, you should not be subjected to a detriment or dismissal.

If you do this, you should retire from the task or area but not go home. You should first talk with your union, and you should try to do this collectively wherever possible, rather than exercise that right alone.

What Unite wants

Unite is fighting for a maximum working temperature, set against the type of work and the environment work is carried out in. We want a change in the law so that employers must attempt to reduce temperatures if they get above 24 degrees C indoors and workers feel uncomfortable.

Join Unite

The law sets out some rights to keep you safe, but as explained here, they don't even set a maximum working temperature. Unionised workplaces are safer workplaces. Unionised workers are stronger, so they can enforce and extend their rights at work. And the research shows, they are likely to work in safer workplaces.

So, if you are not a member already, JOIN UNITE TODAY!

<https://join.unitetheunion.org/>



6.2 A Know Your Rights Guide for Apprentices in the UK

Your Employment Rights

As an apprentice, you are entitled to the same rights as other employees. These legal rights include:

Being a member of a Trade Union

You are legally entitled to join a trade union. Unite offers a specially discounted membership rate for all apprentices and can provide the same levels of support to apprentices as with any other member.

By standing together in a union we have a stronger voice at work and can demand - and win - better rights than the law sets out.

Minimum Wage

Apprentices are entitled to at least the Apprentice Minimum Wage rate. These vary according to your age and what stage of your apprenticeship you are at.

You can check the current rates here: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Working Hours

You must not be asked to work more than 48 hours per week (unless you opt out).

If you are under 18, you cannot, by law, work more than 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week.

Breaks

You're entitled to rest breaks and at least one day off per week (additional rest entitlements are covered by legislation for those who are under 18):

- Additional rest entitlements for workers under 18 include a 30 minute break if they work more than 4.5 hours, daily rest of 12 hours, and weekly rest of 48 hours.

Paid Holiday

You are entitled to at least 28 days of paid holiday per year or the equivalent for part timers or shift workers (this can include public holidays).

Facts and Figures

- If you work part time or shifts, you can calculate your leave entitlement here: <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-holiday-entitlement>



Sick Pay

Apprentices are entitled to the same sick pay rights as other employees in the UK. Eligible workers are legally entitled to the lesser of £123.25 per week or 80% of their average weekly earnings, for up to 28 weeks.

If eligible, you are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you're off work due to illness. Your company or organisation may have policies which go over and above the legal minimum, so it is always best to check their policy first.

Health and Safety

Your employer must, by law, ensure a safe working environment.

You must receive appropriate training and protective equipment if needed.

Training and Development:

At least 20% of your time must be spent in off-the-job training.

Training must lead to a recognised qualification.

Your employer and training provider must support your learning and progression.

Contract

You must have a written apprenticeship agreement, outlining your job role, training, wage, and duration of the apprenticeship.



You should also receive a commitment statement (shared with your employer and provider) setting out expectations and support.

Ending Your Apprenticeship

You can resign with notice, just like any other job.

Employers must follow fair procedures if ending your apprenticeship early.

Redundancy rights apply if your role is no longer available.

Protection Against Discrimination and Bullying

You are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

You have the right to work free from discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment.



Grievances and disciplinaries

If you are unhappy about your treatment at work, you have a right to 'raise a grievance' - by submitting a letter internally, describing what you are unhappy about.

The company must hear all genuine grievances and seek to make things right.

You have a right to be accompanied by a colleague or accredited trade union representative.

Similarly, if your employer is unhappy with you, after using informal channels they must write to you explaining the issue.

Again you can be represented by your union rep.

Union reps help thousands of workers every day deal with unfair treatment at work - both at an individual level (representing one worker in a grievance or disciplinary) and collectively (negotiating better conditions at work).

Facts and Figures

Join your Union

The law sets the MINIMUM your employer can get away with. And even then, sometimes they don't comply.

Unite reps negotiate pay and conditions above these minimums because we are stronger when we stand together.

A model Apprenticeships Guide for workplaces, including a model agreement for reps to negotiate with employers, is available at <https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay/work-voice-pay-guides>



If you want to understand and exercise your rights at work, and if you want to go beyond these basic minimums to a fair deal in your workplace it pays to be in a union. **JOIN UNITE!**



6.3 Endometriosis: use Unite's model workplace policy to safeguard against unfair treatment and stigma

Endometriosis is a long-term and often debilitating condition that affects around **one in ten** women and people assigned female at birth in the UK. Despite this, many workers face years of delayed diagnosis, poor awareness, and stigma both in society and at work.

Unite is clear that endometriosis is not a personal failing – it is a workplace issue. No worker should face unfair treatment, disciplinary action, or financial insecurity because of a chronic health condition.

Having a **model workplace policy** on endometriosis is essential to ensure consistent, fair, and lawful treatment of workers across the organisation. You can access one through the links below. Without a clear policy, support is often left to individual managers' discretion, leading to inconsistency, stigma, and the misuse of sickness or performance procedures.

Endometriosis is a gynaecological condition in which tissue like the lining of the womb grows elsewhere in the body. Symptoms can include **severe pelvic pain, extreme fatigue, brain fog, and mobility difficulties**, all of which can significantly affect working life. Many women are expected to manage these challenges in workplaces that lack understanding, flexibility, or proper support.



Unite believes employers must work with unions to introduce clear workplace policies and reasonable adjustments that properly support workers with endometriosis. This includes **flexible working arrangements, adjusted duties during flare-ups, access to rest facilities, and fair absence management procedures.**

Facts and Figures

Email UniteWomen@unitetheunion.org for more information and to access Unite's model policy to introduce proper support in your workplace. www.unitetheunion.org/equalities

Unite is clear that employers should agree to adjustments such as:

- Flexible start and finish times
- Home or hybrid working
- Extra or longer breaks
- Adjusted duties or workloads during flare-ups
- Ergonomic seating or ability to move
- Access to toilets, rest spaces, or heat pads
- Paid time off for medical appointments
- Absence linked to endometriosis must not trigger disciplinary action
- Workers must not be penalised for performance impacts related to symptoms
- Support should include access to counselling or Employee Assistance Programme (EAPs)

We must not tolerate any discrimination!

"Real change will not come from individuals struggling alone. By organising collectively, Unite can challenge stigma, improve workplace understanding, secure the dignity, equality, and protections that all workers deserve. Unite stands firmly for equality for all - and now is the time for action."

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

6.4 Bite-sized Bargaining: Research shows that women, the young, LGBT+ and disabled people face disproportionate discrimination in the workplace

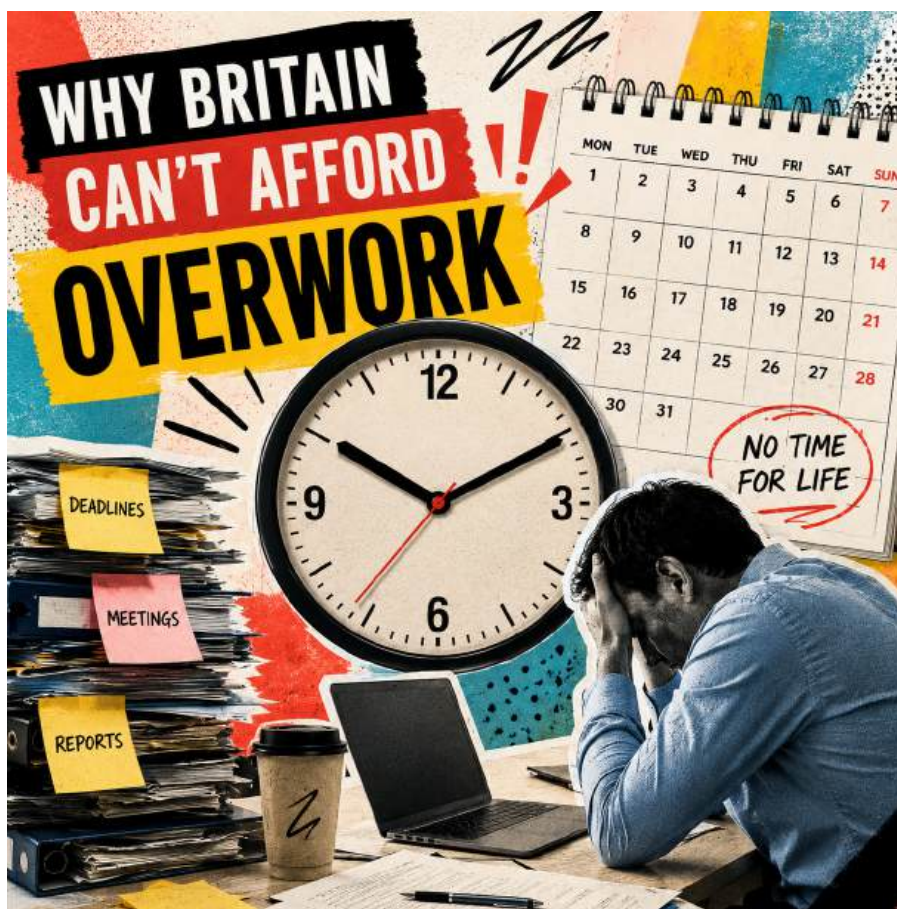
See below for a compilation of Equalities articles in our previous Facts & Figures issues. Unite represents all its members equally and will fight and defend against all forms of discrimination

- Under the Worker Protection Act 2023, employers have to take reasonable steps to stop their workers from being sexually



harassed at work. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/mj2apcj3> or look in the January 2025 edition, p.50-52.

- **Know your rights as a young worker or apprentice in the UK.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/3apsvm2y> or look in August 2025 edition, p.121-123.
- **The TUC reports over half of LGBT+ people experienced workplace bullying/harassment in the last five years.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8hz43j> or look in the February 2025 edition, p.48-50.
- **Support for workers with caring responsibilities: session for reps** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/9vvjt9mv> or look in the April 2026 edition, p.78.
- **Brits are working more and paying for it with their health** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/9vvjt9mv> or look in the April 2026 edition, p.76.







SECTION SEVEN

BUILDING INDUSTRIAL POWER

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7.4	Balloting Brief: Unite Reps across 16 workplaces are balloting their members in the coming month	92

Where are we building our industrial power this month?

We will look to join up local fights and maximise our power through coordination. Without coordination, how can you build solidarity? Without solidarity, how can you build an effective Union or deliver results at the workplace?

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



7. Where are we building our industrial power this month?

7.1 Industrial strength remains high, with Unite members securing ballots and taking action in multiple sectors

Unite members are on the move, taking action and ready to win. This month, members across multiple sectors are on strike, including Local Authorities, Health, and Construction.

- Unite members at 6 different local authorities are going on strike, including **Birmingham City Council**, **Bristol City Council** and **Southwark Council**.
- Unite members at **Cwm Taf Health Board** are continuing strike action. The strikes are in response to a pay grade system that short changes workers up to £9,000 per year.⁵⁴
- Scientists at two teaching hospitals in Lancashire are being forced to take strike action over the **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's** refusal to pay holiday pay that they are entitled to.⁵⁵

Unite Reps are balloting their members in different sectors:

- Aerospace and Shipbuilding: **Thales** and **GKN**.
- Civil Air Transport: **Glasgow Prestwick Airport**, **Highlands and Islands Airports**, **Menzies Aviation**, and **DHL Services**
- Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles: **Eternis Fine Chemicals**, and **Neo Next + Energy E&P**
- Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics: **Wincanton Limited**, and **DHL Services Limited**
- Food, Drink and Agriculture: **Pilgrim's Food Masters UK Limited**



Facts and Figures

7.2 **Unite's Industrial Combines are leading the way in setting and raising standards across our sectors**

Our Industrial Combines have helped bring Reps together to coordinate action sectorally. They are also the most effective way to raise awareness and understanding among workers within a specific industry.

Unite's Finance Combine meets to coordinate pay claims

Unite's Finance Sector Combine meets to coordinate pay claims and negotiations in the Banking and Insurance sector.



To get involved, please email Michelle.Smith@unitetheunion.org

In the latest example of the Finance Combine leading the way, members at Barclays overwhelmingly voted to accept a sector-leading pay deal.

Head over to [Workers' Voice](#) to hear from Katie Reilly, National Convenor for Barclays and a leading light in the Finance Combine.

Unite's Health Combine (England) meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month

Since it was created in 2022, **Unite's Health Combine** for Reps in England meets regularly to discuss, agree and develop campaigns across the NHS in England. Together, it takes on issues that health workers face and supports them to win.

Meetings will take place on the 2nd Wednesday of each month and are open to all Reps in the sector.

Email National Officer Onay Kasab to join **the England Health Combine meetings each month**: onay.kasab@unitetheunion.org

The Combine is focused on a workplan which is near finalisation. Since December, Reps have been identifying, discussing and agreeing key issues that will form campaign areas.

Reorganisations will often come under different titles, including transformation, reviews or service development. But the result is often the same, with proposals that attack pay, conditions and jobs with the accompanying impact on patients and service users. Unite works to respond industrially to such attacks.

As part of a campaign, the Combine is preparing guidance for Reps to show how the law can be used to effectively challenge the employers at consultation stage, especially when it appears to be a “done deal”.



Unite's Ground Services Combine and the CAT Sector Organising Committee will both meet in June in Eastbourne

Unite's Ground Services Combine will meet on 16-17 June in Eastbourne.

This combine is open to those working in ground handling. Reps can join future meetings to discuss pay and working conditions. Please register here: <https://surveys.unitetheunion.org/260982956761977>

The Ground Services Combine has also been carrying out an **online survey about health-related issues** within the aviation industry. To join the survey, click on the link:

<https://surveys.unitetheunion.org/250274033423042>

Similarly, the **CAT Sector Organising Committee** will be meeting on 18 June, in Eastbourne. Reps can join meetings to discuss pay and working conditions. Please register here:

<https://surveys.unitetheunion.org/260982886848985>

To get involved, please email christine.vera@unitetheunion.org or National Officer Balvinder Bir: balvinder.bir@unitetheunion.org

Facts and Figures

7.3 Unite members in sectors including health, construction, and local authorities are taking industrial action this month

The table below shows the workers across many sectors who are fighting for better pay, improved working conditions, and union recognition.

Employer	Region	Unite Sector	Dates
Birmingham City Council - Waste Management Refuse Collection	WM	LAs	Continuous
Job & Talent - Birmingham City Council agency workers	WM	LAs	Continuous
Haldane Fisher Limited- All members at the Newry site	NI	Construction	Continuous
VUR Village Trading No 1 Limited - Walsall	WM	SI	Continuous
CWM TAF MORGANNWG University Health Board - All Band 6 Health Visitors	WA	Health	16-19, 22-26 June 29 June - 03 July, 06-10, 13-17 July
GMB- All members employed as Branch Secretaries working in the Southern Region	LE	CYW&NfP	01-31 July
Qioptiq Limited- All members at the Saint Asaph site	WA	AS	24 June
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust- Members working within the Blood Sciences Department at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital	NW	Health	22-26 June, 29 June - 03 July 06-10 July
London Borough of	National	LAs	23-24 June



Employer	Region	Unite Sector	Dates
Newman - All members save for managers employed on Red Book Ts&Cs at Bridge Road Depot			
Stoke-on-Trent City Council - All members on Red Book Ts&Cs working in the Repairs and Maintenance Service at Cromer Road	National	LAs	23-24 June
Bristol City Council - All members employed under the Construction Craft Operatives Pay Agreement 2011	National	LAs	23-24 June
Southwark Council - All members on Red Book T&Cs	National	LAs	23-24 June
London Borough of Tower Hamlets - All members employed within leisure services	LE	LAs	23, 25, 28 June

Table 6: Unite workplaces due to take industrial action in the next month. Source: Unite (as of 08 June 26)

7.4 Balloting Brief: Unite Reps across 16 workplaces are balloting their members in the coming month

Unite members are fighting for better jobs, pay and conditions with fair and decent pay rises being essential during this cost-of-living crisis.

Employer	Region	Closing
AQA Education - All members	SE	18 Jun
Eternis Fine Chemicals UK Limited - All members save for managers	WM	18 Jun
Glasgow Prestwick Airport Limited - All members save for those in managerial and professional grades covered by the Prospect Trade Union Agreement	SC	22 Jun

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Employer	Region	Closing
Etex UK Insulation Limited - All members at the Thistle Industrial Estate, Stirling	SC	22 Jun
Thales UK Limited - All members at the Linthouse Road and Longwater Avenue site	SC	23 Jun
Highlands and Islands Airports Limited - All members at Barra Airport	SC	24 Jun
Menzies Aviation (UK) Limited - All members at Edinburgh Airport, save for Duty Managers and Officers	SC	25 Jun
DHL Services Limited - All members working on the Easyjet ground handling contract at Gatwick Airport	SE	29 Jun
Wincanton Limited - All members save for managers working at Heywood Distribution Park and Basildon Distribution Centre	NW	30 Jun
DHL Services Limited - All members save for managers working at Heywood Distribution Park and Basildon Distribution Centre	NW	30 Jun
Great Yarmouth Services Limited - All members	LE	01 Jul
GKN Aerospace Services Limited - All members under the Unite bargaining unit in non-management grades at the Western Approach site	SW	02 Jul
Neo Next + Energy E&P Limited - All members working on the Elgin Franklin and North Alwyn offshore platforms	SC	06 Jul
South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust - All members within CEF at Bethlam Royal, Lambeth, Ladywell Unit Lewisham, and Maudsley Hospitals	LE	06 Jul
Pilgrim's Food Masters UK Limited - All members at Carran Business Park	NI	07 Jul
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board - All band 6 visitors	WA	13 Jul

Table 7: Unite workplaces currently balloting for industrial action. Source: Unite Balloting Department (as of 08 June 2026)



8. Appendix 1: Significant Unite wins on pay and conditions

Major trade disputes won by Unite members over the last 12 months:

June 2026 wins

Sector	Company	Results
Passenger Transport	Go North West in Bolton, Denton, Heywood and Wigan	Pay rises of between 23 and 56% over three years. The deal sees baseline pay for most drivers increase from £15.51 an hour to £18 backed dated to April 2026. From April 2027 pay will increase to 19.50 an hour, before rising to £21 an hour from 2028.
Civil Air Transport	Edinburgh Airport Limited	Two-year pay deal: - £1800 or 5.5% increase, whichever is greater, in 2026. - 4% or the RPI+0.5% effective of January 2027. There are improvements to shift, sickness and paternity pay.
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles	Amcor in Northumberland	12.3% increase over three years (4.8% in the first year, 4% in the second, and 3.5% in the third)
Civil Air Transport	Prestwick Airport	from 5.1% up to 8% alongside an extra day annual leave for this year, and improvements to shift payments and pension contributions.
Civil Air Transport	ICTS and Menzies Aviation at Glasgow airport	5% increase in basic pay and shift allowances will be backdated to 1 January with a one-off bank holiday included in 2026. In 2027, the workers will receive the RPI+1% in basic and shift pay alongside a boost to terms and

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Sector	Company	Results
		conditions from 1st January.
Civil Air Transport	Aberdeen International Airport	4.2% pay deal in a one-year deal
Civil Air Transport	ICTS at Aberdeen International Airport	5% increase in basic pay and shift allowances will be backdated to 1 January with a one-off bank holiday included in 2026. In 2027, the workers will receive the RPI+1% in basic and shift pay alongside a boost to terms and conditions from 1st January.

May 2026 wins (RPI was 3.1%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	ABMat Stansted Airport	3.8% pay increase backdated to November 2025 plus 1% from May, and 3.5% next year
Engineering, Manufacturing and Steel	Resideo	8% pay increase this year with a further 5% in 2027
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles	Oxalis at Grangemouth	4-year pay deal: - 4% rise in 2025 alongside an increase in the annual bonus to £1500, and improvements to shift rates. - 5.4% for 2026, - pay increases matching the inflation rate or 3%, whichever is the higher, for 2027 and 2028. In the last year of the deal, the employer pension contributions will also go up from six to eight per cent in addition to enhancements to sick pay and rest day allowances.
Finance and Legal	Barclays	An overall 4.6% increase and a 5.35% pay rise for around 20,000 lower-paid Barclays employees



April 2026 wins (RPI was 3.0%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	GH Luton Ground Handling Services	7.5% effective from 1 April
Engineering, Manufacturing and Steel	National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry	4.5% pay increase
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles	North Air	4.2% pay rise + 5% increase to shift allowances and overtime rates
Construction	Bear Scotland	5.5% pay increase
Civil Air Transport	Bidvest Noonan at Aberdeen Airport	Up to 10.2% pay rise and union recognition agreement

March 2026 wins (RPI was 4.1%)

Sector	Company	Results
Engineering, Manufacturing and Steel	Oregon timber	4.8% pay deal, plus significant enhancements to conditions including the introduction of a company sick pay scheme and paid time off for hospital appointments alongside the restoration of a service-related bonus scheme.
Aerospace and Shipbuilding	BAE Systems at Warton and Samlesbury	6% pay deal, plus additional annual leave and a one-off payment
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Oxalis	RPI+2% - which works out as 6.2 per cent as it was based on December 2025 RPI.
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles	Lochcarron Mill	6.7% pay increase

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Sector	Company	Results
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles	Bilfinger UK Limited	5% increase in company's pension contribution
Civil Air Transport	ICTS at Glasgow airport	7% pay rise backdated to October + overtime rates being increased to time and half

February 2026 wins (RPI was 3.6%)

Sector	Company	Results
Docks, Rail, Ferries, & Waterways	Orkney Ferries	Two-year pay deal. In year one, a 5% pay increase and a non-consolidated £600 payment. In year two, a 3.5% pay increase or January 2026 RPI rate - whichever is higher.
Service Industries	Sodexo Remote Sites Scotland Limited	Two-year pay deal. In year one, a cost of living payment of up to £1,225, a 4% pay increase backdated to 1 April, and retention of the attendance bonus of up to £1,000. In year-two, a 4% pay increase and retention of the attendance bonus of up to £1,000.
Civil Air Transport	ICTS at Glasgow airport	9.8% increase for the baggage screeners last year backdated to October 2024
Food Drink and Agriculture	Diageo	15.5% in a three-year deal

January 2026 wins (RPI was 3.8%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	Heathrow cabin crew at SAS airline	8% pay increase, overtime pay go to a maximum of £240, two additional days of annual leave, and an additional pay grade
Engineering, Manufacturing and Steel	Glen Dimplex	Between 6% to 8% pay increase
Engineering, Manufacturing and Steel	Bosch Rexroth Limited	4% pay increase backdated to 01/01/26.



Sector	Company	Results
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Menzies Distribution Solution Limited	4.25% pay increase for 2025, and 3.75% for 2026
Aerospace and Shipbuilding	Safran Nacelles Limited	4.5% pay increase backdated to February 2025 in year one, and 3.3% in year two. New employee incentive scheme worth up to £750 introduced.
Civil Air Transport	DHL Services Limited	18-month pay deal including a 5.5% pay increase backdated to October 2025, a 25% increase to night shift premiums, and a £250 payment.
Passenger Transport	First Glasgow	5% pay increase

December 2025 wins (RPI was 4.2%)

Sector	Company	Results
Health	GFM at Newham Centre for Mental Health	Up to 15% pay rise, five days additional annual leave, improved full & half day sick pay. Plus a recognition agreement
Passenger Transport	Arriva Leicestershire	6.5%, one off non-consolidated payment of £1,000 and an improvement to their bank holiday working rate
Passenger Transport	First Aberdeen	5.3% for one year
Passenger Transport	First Cymru	5%

November 2025 wins (RPI was 3.8%)

Sector	Company	Results
Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways	Immingham DB Cargo	£11,723 in back pay for each worker
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	GXO Logistics	4%, boost to overtime payments
Government,	Amulet Security	4%+4% over two years, additional day of

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Sector	Company	Results
Defence, Prisons, and Contractors	at Bank of England	annual leave
Aerospace and Shipbuilding	Leonardo	8% over two years (across five sites)

October 2025 wins (RPI was 4.3%)

Sector	Company	Results
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles	Altradon EnQuest's Magnus and Thistle Alpha platforms	4.5%
Aerospace and Shipbuilding	Lufthansa Technik	5%
Passenger Transport	Ribble Motor Services	Birkenhead - 10% Chorley and Preston - 6.2%
Passenger Transport	First West of England	8.6% over two years
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	Collins Aerospace	A fully consolidated 10.3% over a 28-month period
Civil Air Transport	Bournemouth International Airport	4.5% in year one, plus an additional £1/hour for workers classed as front of house backdated to 1 April. In year two, an additional pay rise of inflation plus 0.5%, or 3.1% (whichever is greater)

September 2025 wins (RPI was 4.5%)

Sector	Company	Results
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	EPTA UK	6% increase on all rates backdated to 1 April 2025, bonus scheme, improved holiday scheme, and improved maternity/paternity policy
Civil Air Transport	OCS Group at Edinburgh Airport	Two-year pay deal of 6.1% backdated to 1 January 2025 and a further 5% from 1 January 2026. Overtime rates



Sector	Company	Results
		increased by time and a half, as well as improved sick pay
Passenger Transport	First Potteries	9.8% pay deal over two years and £250 payment
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles	Alpla UK	Two one-off payments of between £1,000 and £9,000 based on experience and one additional day holiday

August 2025 wins (RPI was 4.6%)

Sector	Company	Results
Public Transport	Cardiff Bus	5.86% + improvements to breaks and travel time
Public Transport	Stagecoach Northeast	5%
Aerospace	Princess Yachts	6.50%
Service Industry	Village Hotel Glasgow	10%
Civil Aviation Transport	ICTS (Gatwick Airport)	7% + Bank holiday double time
Food, Drink & Agriculture	Dale Farm	4.75%

July 2025 wins (RPI was 4.8%)

Sector	Company	Results
Energy	Scottish Water	The lowest paid Grade 2 workers will receive a 10.67% pay increase with increases for all other grades tapering to a 4.85% increase for the highest Grade 8 staff.
Civil Aviation Transport	Skytanking 'front-of-house' customer service, ramp and bagging agents	A basic 5% increase
Civil Aviation Transport	Menzies Aviation	The one-year pay deal, an average increase of 6.5% with some members gaining up to 10%, introduction of a pay grade system

Facts and Figures

Sector	Company	Results
		which rewards length of service and skills.
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Wincanton (Marshalls contract) Wilson James (Heathrow Passenger Assistance)	5% + £1000 lump sum
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Oxalis Logistics UK Limited	Increases in the base rate and other elements of pay (excluding bonus): Y1 - 5%, Y2 - 3.5%, Y3 - Effective 1st January 2027 - mean average of RPI and CPI for December 2026 with a minimum of 3%. Improvement to holiday and sick pay.



9. Appendix 2: Unite recognition agreements

Over the last 12 months, Unite has secured many recognition agreements across the UK, with thousands more members now being covered by Unite in the workplace.

See below for a list of major recognition deals in the last year.

Date	Employer	Note
Jun-26	OCS at British Airways HQ	The recognition agreement provides sole bargaining for Unite over pay, terms and conditions, including working hours and annual leave.
May-26	Seagate Technologies	Third workforce recognition agreement with Seagate, covering administration staff in Northern Ireland.
May-26	St John Ambulance & Rescue Service	Union recognition agreement for 56 workers in Guernsey.
May-26	EnQuest	Union recognition agreement in the North Sea.
May-26	Harrods	Union recognition agreement for engineering, maintenance staff, and members of fire, health and safety.
Apr-26	Apache	Union recognition agreement in the offshore sector in the North Sea.
Mar-26	Bidvest Noonan workers at Aberdeen Airport	Union recognition agreement and double digit pay deal covering cleaners.
Feb-26	Glasgow Community Food Network	Union recognition for Glasgow food workers.
Jan-26	Trescal	Recognition agreement for Trescal employees based in Derby Riverside Court.
Dec-25	Grosvenor Facilities Management (GFM)	Union recognition and wage win (up to 15% and improvements to annual leave and sick pay).
Nov-25	Amulet Security at the Bank of England	Union recognition and enhanced pay.

Facts and Figures

Date	Employer	Note
Oct-25	Bear Scotland	Union recognition and wage win (up to 7.25% and improvements to standby payments).
Oct 25	Norwich Eaton Park Café	Voluntary recognition agreement marking the first ever hospitality venue in the city to sign an agreement recognising its workers' chosen union.
Sep 25	Gipson Supported Independent Living	Recognition agreement for everyone from housing support workers and counsellors to advice and employment workers.
Aug 25	EMCOR UK	A formal recognition agreement for workers in facilities management at Oxford University.
Aug 25	Lineage	Recognition agreement for 30 drivers and shunters.
Aug 25	Liverpool University	Improvement of collective bargaining agreement with new terms to protect home working for over 300 professional services staff after strike action.
Aug 25	Lockwood Haulage	Recognition agreement.
July 25	Culina Logistics in Tilbury Port	Recognition for 300+ workers.
July 25	Oscar Mayer	Recognition agreement for more than 500 workers, reinstatement of 26 dismissed workers, improvements to holiday compensation.
July 25	TAC Healthcare Group Limited on Repsol platforms	Recognition agreement for around 20 off-shore medics.



10. Appendix 3: Other unions' major pay increases

The following table details private sector pay deals of 5%+ won by other unions over the last year, taken from the **Labour Research Department**. They include multi-year deals.

Name	Date	Result (%)
G4S (Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service)	Nov-25	6.2
Poundland Distribution Transport (Wigan)	Jun-25	6.02
G4S (PSNI)	Nov-25	6
Sofina Foods (Cookstown)	Jan-26	5.5
Wrightlink	Jan-26	5.2
Grand Central Rail	Jan-26	5
Serco Northlink Ferries	Oct-25	5
Koura	Jan-26	5
Unipart Rail Doncaster	Apr-26	5

Endnotes

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